

THE
BHAGAVAD GEETA

VOLUME III

WITH A FOREWORD BY

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Text in Sanskrit followed by Roman transliteration,
word for word translation, a general paraphrase and
exhaustive discourses upon each stanza

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SRIMAD BHAGAWAD GEETA

CHAPTER XIII

INTRODUCTION

This is one of the most famous chapters in the Geeta which gives the student a very direct explanation and almost a personal experience of the Subject in him, the Self, free from his material equipments and their misinterpretation—the world-of-objects. Thus this chapter stands as a logical continuation of the previous chapter: in as much as we have herein an exhaustive exposition of how to meditate directly upon the Imperishable Formless Spirit.

Geeta being a philosophical poem, however much it may try to hide its austere beauty behind an enchanting veil of its own lyricism, fragrant with the human touches provided by the Krishna-love and the Arjuna-weaknesses, the Lord's song is a thunderous roar of the Rishi's wisdom. As such the theme developed in this philosophic poem is unrelentingly logical and uncompromisingly scientific. And

it has an unyielding frame-work in the very continuity in its systematic thought-development.

In the eighteen-chaptered Geeta viewed as a whole we can say that this chapter, now under discussion, has its direct theme-parentage in the ideas discussed already in the chapter * entitled "*Knowledge and Experience*" and in the chapter † entitled the "*Imperishable Brahman*". The intervening three chapters ‡ were occasioned because of Arjuna's intellectual hesitations and mental doubts. But the philosopher in Krishna never forgets the main theme that he has developed upto the "*Imperishable Brahman*". And when he has consoled his disciple temporarily of his doubts he serenely goes back to take up the melody of his discussion which happened to get snapped, because of the shrill piping of the ego-centric intellect in his mortal disciple.

Even though the teacher here is taking up an old broken thread to spin on the continuity of thought in the following chapters, in Vyasa's artistry this chapter is so beautifully joined with the previous one that unless the student is extremely sensitive and careful he will not recognise the soldering.

The eighteen chapters of the Geeta can fall into three distinct groups or sections of six Chapters each,* according to some reviewers of the Lord's Song. These three sections, according to them, explain the three sacred words in one of the great declarations (*Mahavakyas*): "That Thou Art". The first section concluded by the first six chapters, explained the term "*Thou*"; the second section constituted

* Chapter VII.

† Chapter VIII.

‡ Chapter IX, X & XI.

* Refer General Introduction.

of the following six chapters explained the term “*That*”, and the closing set of six chapters will explain the correlative verb in the sacred commandment, and thus in this section the term “*Art*” is explained. And Chapter thirteen is the beginning of this concluding section.

Spirit functioning through matter envelopments is the living organism: “*That*” dressed in matter is “*Thou*”. Therefore, man undressed of matter is the Eternal and Infinite Spirit.

To undress, and thereby get rid of matter, we must have a precise knowledge of what all constitute the realm of matter in us. This discrimination between the inert matter equipments and the vibrant Spark-of-Life, the Spirit, is presented to us in this chapter, which is rightly called the Field and the Knower-of-the-Field—*Kshetra Kshetragna Yoga*.

The process of undressing is but the process of meditation. The pose, the attitude, and the other technical secrets of meditation were all exhaustively explained* earlier. But having sat in meditation what exactly the integrated mind-and-intellect has to do and how to draw ourselves from ourselves and seek our identity with the Infinite are being exhaustively explained in this chapter.

The matter-equipments and their perceived worlds-of-objects together constitute the *Field*, and the Supreme Consciousness, illumining them and, therefore, seemingly functioning within the field, gathers to itself as a consequence the station of “*Knower of this Field*”. One is a knower only so long as one is in a field of knowables.

A driver is one who is driving; a rider is one who is riding a horse; a swimmer is one who is swimming at the moment. Off the steering-wheel, off the saddle, away

* Chapters V & VI

from the waters, the driver, the rider and the swimmer are only three individuals. While functioning in a given field, the subject gathers to himself certain special status depending upon the nature of the field and the type of functions performed by him therein.

The Pure Consciousness perceiving a world-of-plurality through Its own conditionings becomes the “*Knower of the Field*” and this knower comes to experience thereby the joys and sorrows, successes and failures, peace and agitation, jealousies, fears and a million other wrecking storms and upheavals. The sorrows of *Samsar* are thus entirely the private wealth of the “*Knower of the Field*”—the *Jiva*.

If through discrimination the *Field* and its *Knower* are known separately, through meditation the student can detach himself from the matter equipments, and, therefore, from the field of these sorrow-ridden experiences. Thereby the *Knower-of-the-field* who was the experiencer of the sorrows, himself becomes the experience of the Absolute Knowledge.

Mathematically: Knowledge, in a field of known things and happenings, becomes the Knower, which suffers the imperfections of the known. The Knower minus *the field of the known* becomes the Pure Knowledge, Itself ever perfect and joyous. A careful study of the chapter will open up enough secret windows to the vast amphitheatre of spiritual insight within ourselves.

अथ त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः

अर्जुन उवाच

प्रकृतिम् पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।

एतत् वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna uvacha

1 prakrtim purusam caiva
ksetram ksetrajnam eva ca
etad veditum icchami
jnanam jneyam ca kesava

प्रकृतिम् - The Prakriti (Matter), पुरुषम् - the Purusha (spirit or soul), च - and, एव - even, क्षेत्रम् - the field, क्षेत्रज्ञम् - the knower of the field, एव - even, च - and, एतत् - this, वेदितुम् - to know, इच्छामि - (I) wish, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, ज्ञेयम् - what ought to be known, च - and, केशव - O Kesava.

Arjuna said :

1. Prakriti (Matter) and Purusha (Spirit), also the Kshetra (the Field) and Kshetrajna (the knower of the Field), Knowledge and that which ought to be known, — these, I wish to learn, O Kesava.

In several manuscripts this stanza is not found. But in some others it is met with as a doubt expressed by Arjuna. Shankara gives no commentary on this stanza which clearly shows that the original text available with him at that time did not contain this stanza. With this couplet, the total number of stanzas in the Geeta becomes 701 ; and without it they are only 700. However, for us, simple folk, this question is quite helpful as it indicates in an epitome the

subjects that are dealt with in this chapter. It would perhaps be too big a pill to gulp down if we say that Arjuna become so intelligent as to ask directly such a subjective question at this stage of discussion, because we met him just now in the last chapter not too wise. And no miracle could have happened within the short interval of these two chapters. And yet, we salute the kindly interpolator who has given us this stanza !

“*Prakriti and Purusha*”: In the Sankhyan Philosophy in India, the Acharyas have used these two technical terms to indicate the inert equipments (*Prakriti*) and the vital sentient Truth (*Purusha*) that sets in action the entire assemblage. In short, *Prakriti* is matter and *Purusha* is the Spirit. The Spirit in itself has no expression except when It plays through matter. When *Purusha* weds *Prakriti*, the experiences of good and bad are in legions born. Electricity in itself cannot manifest as light. But when it weds with the bulb it is manifested as light.

“*The Field and the Knower-of-the-Field*”: We have already explained these two terms in our introduction to this chapter. The *Knower-of-the-Field* is the status of the Knowing Principle when it is functioning in the “Field-of-the Known”. Bereft of the field-of-objects the “Knower” himself becomes nothing but Pure Knowledge without the functions of knowing attached to it.

“*The Mechanism and the objects-of-knowledge*”: Conditioned knowledge bits, meaning knowledge-of-things, are the constant experience of all the living creatures in life. Naturally, an investigation into the “mechanism of knowing” and its manipulations and the “true object to be known” will be helpful to all seekers.

All these are the themes that are to be discussed in this chapter and, therefore, the wise and kindly interpolator has

put them all together into one stanza in the mouth of Arjuna in the form of a question, “ *These, O Keshava, I desire to learn*”. We the students of the Geeta are now well prepared to enter the chapter under review.

Listen how the Lord answers all these questions categorically :

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ २ ॥

Sribhagavan uvaca

2. *idam sariram kaunteya
ksetram ity abhidhiyate
etad yo vetti tam prahuh
ksetrajna iti tadvidah*

इदम् - This, शरीरं - body, कौन्तेय - O Kaunteya, क्षेत्रम् - the field, इति - thus, अभिधीयते - is called, एतत् - this, यः - who, वेत्ति - knows, तम् - him, प्राहुः - (they) call, क्षेत्रज्ञः - the knower of the Field, इति - thus, तद्विदः - the knowers of that.

The Blessed Lord said :

2. This body, O Kaunteya (son of Kunti) is called the Field; he who knows it (body) is called Kshetrajna (the knower of the Field) by those who know of them (Kshetra and Kshetrajna) i.e., by the Sages.

We already have said that in many of the manuscripts this stanza is the opening couplet in the chapter. There is enough justification to make it so since all of a sudden Arjuna cannot be considered intellectually smart enough to start this new topic, which has no immediate link with what

has been said in the previous chapter. The Geeta Acharya being a master mind, having finished a certain topic in the previous chapter, it is but expected of him to open up, in his own artistic originality, a new point of discussion.

And the point so opened has its roots on what has been discussed already. * There, then, the thread of discussion was broken up by the disciple's questions, which demanded immediate and elaborate answers.

The art of perfection is subjective. The Vedantic seers of our Hindu Scriptures are unanimous in their conclusion that a subjective quest is the path to reach ultimately and realise the Self. Here, in the chapter, we find a beautiful philosophical dissection of the subjective structure of man, exposing the matter envelopments that had come to condition the Spirit. A discriminative knowledge of the matter layers, as distinct from the Spiritual Core, will assure the seeker the way to rediscover his identity with the Spirit, and realise the actual non-existence of matter when viewed from the realm of the spirit.

A "waker" in a certain mental framework himself becomes a "dreamer" and to the "dreamer" the dream is practically real so long as the dream continues. But on awakening the "dreamer" realises that the dream was only a misinterpretation of the waking, rendered by the "dreamer's" mind. Similarly the pluralistic world is perceived when the Spirit views through Its own imaginary world of matter, and on awakening to Its own spiritual status It rediscovers Its own absolute in which the phantom of matter has no substantiality at all.

Thus in a living man, philosophically viewed, there are two aspects: the inert and insentient matter layers and the

* Chapters VII & VIII.

sentient and vital Consciousness. These two aspects are defined in this stanza.

“This body O ! son of Kunti, is called the Field” :—In this mechanical age it is very easy to understand that there must be a field for an energy to play and then alone it can manifest as work-done and serve man. Steam-energy cannot be resolved into locomotion unless it is made to pass through a steam-engine. Electricity cannot give us breeze unless it passes through the engine of a fan. Thus an engine is the “field” through which the right type of energy when sent, it manifests. The equipments through which Life passes, when an individuality is expressed, that assembly of matter-layers is defined here by Krishna as the “Field”.

“He who knows it, is called the ‘Knower-of the Field’” .

This field is made up of lifeless matter, the minerals. And yet, so long as it lives and functions, it knows. This “principle of knowing”, functioning in the “field” is the enjoyer of the field : the “knower”, the ego.

So long as life exists in any living organism, it expresses an urge to know. The degree of this urge may vary from individual to individual in the universe. But the urge to know, expressed through a vehicle, is what we recognise as its life. The capacity of an organism to receive stimuli and send forth responses is the transaction of life, and when this “knower”, the individuality, has departed from an equipment we consider it as dead. This is the “Knower of the Field” (*Kshetragna*).

“By those who know of them” : In Hindu Philosophy not even Lord Krishna has a right to make an original declaration. The originality in philosophy is only the vibrancy of its expressions. When a right emphasis is laid on some of the statements of truth which we already know

of, the old ideas gather in their new attire a staggering freshness and at such moments, the interpreter has to prove that what he says has been the conclusions arrived at in the proved truths of the scriptures. .

Here Lord Krishna has assured his listeners that the definitions given by him to the terms “body” and the “knower of the body” are not arbitrary declarations or hypothetical suppositions, but they are in keeping with the lived experiences of all the great masters of yore. In short, here we have a definition of matter (*Kshetra*) and Spirit functioning through it (*Kshetrajna*). The entire world-of-objects constitutes the kingdom of matter, and the vital knower of the world of matter constituted by the equipments and their entire array of perceptions, feelings and thoughts is the Spirit.

“*Is this all the knowledge that one has to acquire about them? No, Listen.*”

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ ३ ॥

3. *ksetrajnam ca pi mam viddhi*
sarvaksetresu bharata
ksetraksetrajnayor jnanam
yat taj jnanam matam mama

क्षेत्रज्ञम् - The knower of the field, च - and, अपि - also, माम् - me, विद्धि - know, सर्वक्षेत्रेषु - in all fields, भारत - O Bharata, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः - of the field and of the knower of the field, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, यत् - which, तत् - that, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, मतम् - is considered to be, मम - my.

3. Do thou also know Me as the knower of the Field in all Fields, O Bharata. Knowledge as to the Field and the knower of the Field is considered by Me to be the Knowledge.

Indicating thus by the previous stanza the world of matter and the thrilling spirit of Truth that presides over it, here is a staggering announcement, "*I am the Knower-of-the-Field in all the fields.*" If in all the fields the "Knower" is one, then the plurality is only in the matter-envelopments and the Life that presides over them is one everywhere. This universally one, transcendental Truth is indicated here by the first-person singular "*I am*" because every seeker has to rediscover in himself "*That I am.*" (*Soham*)

We had already indicated earlier that Lord Krishna is declaring Geeta in a rare moment of yogic integration (*Yogarudha*) *. He is identifying with the Self that is everywhere. This is something like electricity declaring that "I am the one energy that gives the glow in all filaments all over the world."

After thus indicating the one Spirit behind all the world-of-matter, wherever it may be, Krishna declares that according to him a correct knowledge, vitally experienced and lived, of what constitute in each one of us, the perishable, changeable, finite, inert matter and what is the nature of the Infinite, Imperishable and Sentient Spirit, is the Supreme Knowledge. "*Kshetra*" is the field-of-matter which is constituted of the various equipments of perception

* In later Mahabharata, when Arjuna had returned back to Hastinapur, he one day requested Krishna to repeat the Geeta and there the Lord admitted that he could not do so with the same efficiency as he did in the battle-field, "because" he said, "I was then in a full State of Yoga."

and the vast fields of the perceived. “*Kshetragna*” is the subject that enjoys the activities of the instruments of perception and the world perceived by them. To distinguish thus the world-of-the-subject and the realm-of-the-objects is the salutary Knowledge which can redeem us from our present confusions and sorrows, which we experience to-day as individualised Egos

On this stanza Sankara has the longest commentary to give, as many objections are raised by the believers in different philosophical concepts. And as a commentator Sankara had to answer them all. That type of a commentary is not called forth in our times, and, in fact, it would be too confusing for the modern man. Therefore we resist our temptation to enter into such noisy word-duels.

Since a precise knowledge of the worlds of the subject and of the objects is unavoidable to a true seeker walking the Path of Knowledge, we will have to make an exhaustive study of them. Therefore :

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारी यतश्च यत् ।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ ४ ॥

4. *tat ksetram yac ca yadrk ca
yadvikari vatas ca yat
sa ca yo yatprabhavas ca
tat samasena me srnu*

तत् - That, क्षेत्रम् - field, यत् - which, च - and, यादृक् - what like, च and, यद्विकारी - what its modifications, यतः - whence, च - and, यत् - what, सः - he च - and, यः - who, यत्प्रभावः - what his powers, च - and, तत् - that, समासेन - in brief, मे - from me, शृणु - hear.

4. What the Field and of what nature, what are its modifications, and whence it is and also who He is and what His powers are, that hear from Me in brief.

It is the technique often employed in all *Sastra*-books that the author himself gives a summary of what he is going to discuss in the following pages. This becomes a preparation for the student who is to listen to them, and it facilitates the student's recapitulation of the entire contents of the Chapter.

“*Of What Nature* : It is not only that we are going to have a discussion of what all constitute the “Field”, the *Kshetra*, but also what it is in itself. “*Of What Nature*”, meaning, what are its properties? “*And Whence is What*” meaning, what effects arise from what causes? i.e. what are the by-products when it changes its form? What is its origin; what effects arise and from what causes? Who is He, the Knowing Principle in the field; what are His powers of perception, feeling and thought? all these “*hear, briefly from me*”.

A mere repetition of the Infinite qualities of the Self is, in itself, of no profit at all to a true seeker. Nor can any evolution actually take place by an over-emphasis of the qualities of the Spirit. To close our eyes to the causes that create our present problems is not to solve the problem. The world-of-matter that has been projected by ourselves around us, and the processes by which we work through it to perceive an infinite varieties of objects, feelings and thoughts—all these are to be brought under our close observation and study. To ignore them is to cheat ourselves of so much of the essential knowledge.

At least a working knowledge of the enemies' strategy is very helpful in planning our anti-strategic movements. To know the nature of all matter envelopments—their play, and how they behave under given sets of different circumstances—is to know the “field” where we have to battle for release and win our victory.

Thus physiology, biology, psychology and all the natural sciences have a real quota of help to give to us. The spiritual path, especially the Path of Knowledge, is the culmination and the fulfilment of the secular sciences. This fact is very well brought out in the fact that when Lord Krishna, even in the midst of the battle-front, when He is trying to explain the secrets of the spirit to the warrior Arjuna, He is not overlooking to emphasise the importance of a close study of the “field” provided by the world-of-matter.

In order to create a growing enthusiasm in the students, to observe, study and understand the worlds-of-matter around the Spirit, Krishna is glorifying the very theme of this Chapter. Listen :

ऋषिभिर्वहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।

ब्रह्मसूत्रपदंश्चैव हेतुमद्भिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ५ ॥

5. *rsibhir bahudha gitam
chandobhur vividhah prthak
brahmasutrapadais ca va
hetumadbhir viniscitaih*

ऋषिभिः -By Rishis, बहुधा - in many ways, गीतम् sung, छन्दोभिः - in chants, विविधैः - various, पृथक् - distinctive, ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैः - in the suggestive words

indicative of Brahman, च - and, एव- even, हेतुमद्भिः
- full of reasoning, विनिश्चितैः - decisive.

5. Rishis have sung in many ways, in various distinctive chants and also in the suggestive words indicative of Brahman, full of reasoning and decisive.

The explanations that are to follow are not idle talks or clever intellectual manifestations springing from the fertile imagination of Sri Murari. In the entire discourse * Krishna openly assures us that what he explains is only a healthy restatement of what “*has been sung by the Rishis in many ways, in different hymns, severally*” In short, the subject matter dealt with here is the very theme which the Upanishads have indicated in their secret verses, especially so “*in its passages treating of Brahman.*”

Why should we so readily accept even these statements of the Rishis in the Upanishads, except it be in a stunned admiration, nurtured by our blind belief, in them? Krishna points out that even if we had no great respect or reverence to the Rishis as such, yet we will have to accept their declarations because they are not intellectual dictations or divine commandments thrust upon the helpless laity by some winged angels of divine prerogative and special sources of secret knowledge. This is the general attitude that poisons the scriptures in almost all other religions. And as a contrast to them, our Upanishadic declarations are “*full of reasoning and so convincing.*”

When a truth is declared, along with the line of logical thinking, then the conclusions arrived at becomes ines-

* In Chapter XIII.

capably acceptable to any intelligent student by the sheer velocity of its appeal.

When Arjuna has been thus prepared to listen attentively to the discourse of the “field” and its “Knower” the Lord says :

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ६ ॥

6. *mahabhutany ahamkaro
buddhir avyaktam eva ca
indriyani dasai kam ca
panca ce ndriyagocarah*

महाभूतानि—The great elements, अहंकारः—egoism, बुद्धिः - intellect, अव्यक्तम् - the unmanifested (Mula Prakriti), एव - even, च - and, इन्द्रियाणि - the senses, दश - ten, एकम् - one, च - and, पञ्च - five, च - and, इन्द्रियगोचराः - objects of the senses.

6. The great elements, egoism, intellect and also the unmanifested (Mula Prakriti), the ten senses and one, and the five objects of the senses.

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. *iccha dvesah sukham dukham
samghatas cetana dhurtih
etat ksetram samasena
savikaram udahrtam*

इच्छा - Desire, द्वेषः hatred, सुखम् - pleasure, दुःखम् - pain, संघातः - the aggregate, चेतना - intel-

ligence, धृतिः - fortitude, एतत् - this, क्षेत्रम् - field, समासेन - briefly, सविकारम् - with modifications, उदाहृतम् - has been described.

7. Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, aggregate (body), intelligence, fortitude-this Kshetra has been thus briefly described with its modifications

From here onwards the promised themes are taken up one by one for discussion by the teacher in the Geeta and each is exhaustively expounded. The two couplets now under discussion enumerate the various items together constituting the Field (*Kshetra*), which was indicated in a previous stanza as "this body" (*Edam Sariram*).

"The Great Elements" (*Mahabhutas*): They are five in number—space, air, fire, water and earth. They are the rudimentary Elements (*Tanmatras*) out of the combinations of which the grosser elements—indicated here in the stanza by the term "Perceptible" (*Indria Gochara*)—are formed.

"The egoism" (*Ahankara*): This is the sense of "I"-ness and "My"-ness that arises in us in our identification with the world-of-objects. It is this that is the perceiver and enjoyer of this world, and it is again ego that enjoys or suffers the joys and sorrows of its own world of likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds and weeps in its attachments to the world outside. The individuality arising out of our relationships with the world-of-matter, is called the ego.

"Intellect" (*Buddhi*): The determining faculty which rationally things and comes to its own conclusions and judges good and bad in every experience of a living man is called the intellect.

"Unmanifested" (*Avyakta*): That which rules the functions of a given mind and intellect and determines their

activities in the world outside is the Unmanifested factor called the “*Vasanas*”. The impressions left over in the mental equipment as a result of our conscious enjoyment of the world outside, determines the direction and the pattern of all our subsequent perceptions and feelings.

Mental capacities and intellectual decisions are determined in each individual and his aptitudes ordered by the type of impressions (*Vasanas*) left over in his subtle body as a result of his previous ego-centric existence amidst the world-of-objects. This spring of all individual activities is the residual *Vasanas* in the individual. Naturally, therefore, in its macrocosmic aspect, the total universe of men and things and their behaviours must be springing from the total *Vasanas* of the total living beings. This totality of *Vasanas* is called in Sanskrit as the “*Moola Prakriti*” by the Sankhyans, or as “*Maya*” by the Vedantins. The Supreme functioning through *Maya* (*Moola Prakriti*) is the Creator of the total universe, and the same Supreme functioning through the *Vasana*-layers in the individual (*Avidya*) is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the individual life, the *Ego*.

From this, it is amply evident that the Unmanifested is but the unseen cause, total *vasanas*, which has manifested as the “seen”, the world-of-objects.

“*The Ten Senses*” : The five sense-organs of perception and the five sense-organs of action are the vehicles by which each individual perceives the stimuli and respond to them.

“*The One*” (*Ekam*) : In the context here this stands for the mind. Even though the sense-organs are many, the faculty in us that receives all the stimuli from all the five avenues of perception is one and the same, the mind—the one Draupadi who has the five Pandavas as her faithful

husbands. Not only that the mind is one in receiving the stimuli, but in executing the judgement of the intellect and thus sending forth responses to the outer world, mind is again the only outlet for the individual personality to express through. The "one" here, therefore, represents the mind.

"*The five objects of the senses*": Each sense-organ has got one definite field of sense-objects to perceive. The eyes can perceive form; the ears can listen to sounds; the nose can smell; the tongue can taste; and the skin feels the touches. None of the sense-organs can perceive the objects of any other sense-organ. Thus, there are five distinct sense-objects. And, in fact, the entire gross world perceived is nothing other than a combination of these five sense-objects.

The items so far enumerated* all together twenty-four in number, are the famous 24 Principles (*Tattavas*) of the Sankhyan Philosophy.

Lord Krishna in his enumeration of the items constituting the "Field" does not stop with these gross equipments of matter; but includes even their modifications such as desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the assemblage of the body (*Samghata*), intelligence, steadfastness etc. In short, not only the gross body, mind and intellect constitute the entire world-of-objects, but even the perceptions experienced through them, the world-of-objects, emotions and thoughts are included in the all-comprehensive term: the "Field"—"this body" (*Edam Sariram*).

* five subtle elements (5), egoism (6), intellect (7), the unmanifested (8), the ten sense-organs (18), mind (19), and the five sense-objects (24),

Anything other than the subject is something that belongs to the world-of-objects and can be perceived as an object. Mental, emotional and intellectual ideas are also the objects of our knowledge and, therefore, with reference to the Subject all the seen, felt or known are but objects. This entire world-of-objects is indicated by the Geeta in this chapter by the phrase "*this body*".

It may be casually noted here that according to the "*Vaisheshikas*" desire, hatred, pleasure, pain etc. are attributes inherent in the "*Atman*". To the Sankhyan however these are the properties (*Vikar*) of the realm-of-matter. In a word, the entire world of "knowables" together in a bunch, stands labelled as a Field (*Kshetra*). And the Knowing Principle, seemingly functioning on as the "Knower", (*Kshetrajna*), is the subject. To distinguish the Subject from the world-of-objects, an exhaustive understanding of what all constitutes the object is necessary. Hence this labourious enumeration. The entire world-of-matter in the cosmos has been directly and by implication embraced in these two stanzas.

The following section, constituted of five continuous stanzas together lists twenty qualities which together indicate the Knower (*Kshetrajna*). In fact the Kower-of-the-Field is directly described,* but in the following couplets† certain mental and emotional natures, moral attitudes and ethical principles are prescribed since they are the unavoidable prerequisites in an individual seeker before he can apprehend and experience the Infinite Self.

* In Stanza 12, Chapter XIII.

† Stanzas 7 to 11 in Chapter XIII.

They are enumerated as follows :

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ८ ॥

8. *amanitvam adambhitvam*
ahimsa ksantir arjavam
acaryopasanam saucam
sthairyam atmaavinigraha

अमानित्वम् - Humility, अदम्भित्वम् - unpretentiousness, अहिंसा - non-injury, क्षान्तिः - forgiveness, आर्जवम् - uprightness, आचार्योपासनम् - service of the teacher, शौचम् - purity, स्थैर्यम् - steadiness, आत्मविनिग्रहः - self-control.

8. Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control.

From this stanza onwards we get a description of the elements of Knowledge and they include moral qualities and ascetic practices which are conducive to the spiritual awakening.

Humility—meaning absence of self-esteem ; *Modesty*—the virtue of not proclaiming one's own greatness ; *Non-injury*—to any living being mainly by our own vicious intentions and feelings ; *Patience*—capacity to suffer long without being teased by it ; *Service of the Teacher*—not merely physical but the real service of the teacher in an attempt on the part of the student to seek a mental and intellectual identity with the teacher's pure heart and intellect ; *Purity*—not merely the cleanliness of his physical structure, but of his dress and other belongings of the seeker and of the environ-

ments in which he is living. It comprehends also the inner purity in thoughts and emotions, intensions and motives, passions and urges ; *Steadfastness*—consistency of purpose and concentration of all efforts towards achieving the cultural and the spiritual goal, striven for ; *Self-Control*—Self-restraint practised at all the personality-layers, both in their collective and several contacts with the world outside.

“ *Moreover... ..*

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ९ ॥

9. *indriyarthesu vairagyam
anahamkara eva ca
janmamrtyujaravyadhi-
duhkhadosanudarsanam*

इन्द्रियार्थेषु - Of sense-objects, वैराग्यम् - dispassion, अनहंकारः - absence of egoism, एव - even, च - and, जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् - perception of evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.

9. Indifference to the objects of the senses, and also absence of egoism, perception (or reflection on) of evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.

Absence of attachment for objects:—This does not mean running away from the objects of the world. Living in the midst of these objects, to switch off our mental pre-occupations with them ; living amidst the objects detachedly and not shackling ourselves with them in utter slavery is meant here by the term *Vairagya*. To run away from the objects and to indulge in them mentally create suppressions and

such an individual is labelled as a hypocrite (*Mithyacara*) by the Lord Himself. †

Abandonment of the thought of 'I' :— The individuality-sense comes only when we identify ourselves with the equipments and their perceptions. To reduce this delusory misconception of ourselves is an essential pre-requisite before we can assert and come to live our own real divine nature. This is equivalent to the weeding that must precede planting in any field of cultivation.

Perception of the evil of the pain :— To feel discontented with a situation alone can goad us to discover a new state of existence. Whether it is a nation, a community or a society so long as they are fully aware of the fact that their present conditions are despicable and tragic they will adopt themselves to live in that condition unconscious of their sorrows. Every politician or social worker first makes the people understand their present state of degradation and destitution. When once this realisation has come to them that society is ready with all enthusiasm to seek fresh fields of greater joys and fuller life.

The same technique is applicable in the cultural field. Unless a seeker is fully conscious of the inward personality-shackles in himself he will live on in his own ditch of sorrow never striving to get out of it. Both the human mind and body have a tremendous amount of adaptability. They can adopt themselves to any condition and even come to enjoy them.

Unless a seeker is constantly conscious of the evil of the pain in his present state of existence, he will not discover

† Chapter III, Stanza 6.

the necessary spiritual urge, intellectual dash, emotional enthusiasm or the physical courage to seek, to fight for, to win and to possess the diviner fields of perfection.

In birth, death, old age and sickness :— Every physical body in the world goes through these modifications. And each one of them is an inlet for fresh sources of sorrow. Birth, growth, decay, disease and death are the tragic destinies of all living equipments. In all the metamorphosis, to constantly recognize pain is to feel an impatience with it. This sense of revolt against pain is the fuel that drives the seekers faster and faster to the peaks of perfection.

Moreover

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १० ॥

10. *asaktir anabhisvngah
putradaragrhadisu
nityam ca samacittatvam
istanistopapattisu*

असक्तिः - Non-attachment, अनभिष्वङ्गः - non-identification of self, पुत्रदारगृहादिषु - with son, wife home and rest, नित्यम् - constant, च - and, समचित्तत्वम् - even-mindedness, इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु - on the attainment of desirable and the undesirable.

10. Non-attachment, non-identification of Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even-mindedness on the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable.

Unattachment :—Mind sticking on to the various objects of the world in a sense of extreme liking for them is called

attachment. It is these mental contacts with the world outside that makes the mind ever agitated. It is made to dance to the tune of death, the number to which the finite objects of the world most often dance. Fire in itself cannot burn ; but a child gets its fingers burnt, not because of the fire but because, its fingers, propelled by a force called desire, come in actual *contact* with fire. Mental contacts with the world outside provide the breeding centres for all our sorrows in life. The world outside in itself can give us neither an experience of joy nor that of sorrow. Therefore, to keep the mind away from all attachments would be to assure it a peaceful life

*Absence of excessive love for child, wife and home and the like :—*The excessive love of affection is an intense form of attachment with another. It consists in our total identification with the objects of our affection. The lover loses his personal identity in his identification with the beloved to such an extent that he is happy or unhappy according to whether his beloved is happy or sorrowful. Such an intimate relationship is generally met with in the attachment of a mother to its child

To build a wall of discrimination around our inner personality and keep such disturbances away is to discover the equipoise in ourselves—without which no progress or growth is ever possible.

This evenness of mind with a little practice can be maintained unbroken in all situations of life *desirable* and *undesirable*. A human mind thus relieved from its pre-occupations with its own present attachments and affections, unintelligent though they be, will discover in itself a tremendous amount of surplus energy conserved, which might explode into dangerous channels unless rightly directed.

The right channelisation of this newly discovered energies is indicated below :

मयी चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ ११ ॥

11. *maya ca nanyayogena
bhaktir avyabharini
viviktadesasevitvam
aratir janasamsadi*

मयी - To me, च - and. अनन्ययोगेन - by the Yoga of non-separation, भक्तिः - devotion, अव्यभिचारिणी - unswerving, विविक्तदेशसेवित्वम् - resort to solitary places, अरतिः - distaste, जनसंसदि - for the society of men.

11 Unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men.

Perhaps compelled by the nature of Arjuna, a man of action, or perhaps forced by the very spirit of the reformer in the Yogeswara, the Divine song as it comes to us is never theoretical, but always the most practical textbook on Self-re-discovery. The moment the Geeta-Acharya advises his disciple to develop any given mental or intellectual beauty, he always suggests a practical method by which this could be actually accomplished.

In case a seeker were to try to develop in himself the virtues described in the previous three stanzas — not only in his inward life but also in all his contacts with the world around him it is certain that he, an ordinary man of the world, would thereby conserve in himself a vast fold of

energy. The stanza under review describes the right application of this conserved energy in proper directions as to profit thereby and gain a better Self-unfoldment.

*Unflinching devotion to Me :—*Concentration is the focussing of the mind upon a point-of-concentration to the exclusion of all mental excitements and agitations. This steadiness in contemplation may be destroyed by causes arising at two different points—either in the individual's own mind or in the object contemplated upon. Unless both are steady the concentration cannot be successful. If our devotion wavers from idol to idol, then we would be creating a situation in which the practice of concentration is unsteady, because the point-of-attention is rendered ever changing. Therefore, it is said that unflinching devotion towards Me, the Self, is one of the conditions necessary for steady progress and growth in Yoga.

*By the Yoga of non-separation :—*Undivided attention and enthusiasm in the mind of the devotee is another condition that will accomplish a better concentration. Else the mind may become unfaithful in its own devoted self-application and would either partially or wholly wander away into its own delusory enchantments. A certain amount of steadiness of purpose is to be maintained by the mind. Wild imaginations and futile day-dreaming are the preoccupations of disintegrated mind.

The typical expression used here by Sri Krishna to indicate the object and despicable vascillations of the human mind at the seat of Yoga clearly shows the force with which he wants to condemn our indulgence in such a calamitous mistake. He says the mind should be “unprostituting” with its point-of-concentration. Careless of the higher bonds of faithfulness and chastity to sell away one's own capabili-

ties and beauties for the sake of some paltry profit, is prostitution and a mind wedded to the Lord is a mind at faithful contemplation. The warning "not to prostitute" is indeed very powerful to express that the point-of-concentration should not be at a crowd of deities, or a host of ideas, but must be faithfully serving at some chosen single ideal.

Similarly, the other powerful expressions used in the stanza is "the Yoga of non-otherness" (*Ananya Yoga*). Inspired as he was, the Yogeswara coins new phraseology and powerful phrases on the spur of the moment to bring a new fire into his re-interpretation of the ancient Hindu way of Life and self-culturing techniques.

There is no reference anywhere in the scriptural literature of a similar term and its very freshness adds a glow to the Hindu renaissance initiated by the Geeta. In fact every revivalist, whatever be his platform, must have the originality of vision to mint fresh slogans, which though adds nothing to the already existing knowledge, yet dresses them up in an enchanting golden attire.

Such an integrated life of stable mind, and steady contemplation upon a firm ideal, is impossible unless the practitioner works in a conducive environment. This is prescribed in the two indirect advices (a) to *resort to solitary places* and (b) to *develop a distaste for the crowded society life*. The more integrated the personality grows and more maddening becomes its enthusiasm for the quest of that which is dear to its heart, the more the seeker automatically comes to live, alone in himself away from the noisy crowd. This is true of every thinker be he a literary poet, be he a scientific research-scholar, or be he a man with some personal problems. Whenever the mind is fascinated by an enchanting ideal it loses all its contacts with other pre-occupations and

becomes wedded faithfully to its own all-absorbing theme of interest.

Thereafter — just as a poet lives in his own world, just as the scientist is a solitary man even in the market-place—the devotee also enters a cave of his own experiences and he walks alone in the world. He hates the crowd of other thoughts entering his mind, he lives alone in himself. These two terms should not be misunderstood as physical escapism into a tomb-like solitude or as a physical aversion to the society of men.

Moreover.....

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १२ ॥

12. *adyatmajnananityatvam*
tattvajnanarthadarsanam
etaj jnanam iti proktam
ajnanam yad ato nyatha

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वम् - Constancy in self knowledge, तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् - perception of the end of true knowledge, एतत् - this, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, इति - thus, प्रोक्तम् - declared, अज्ञानम् - ignorance, यत् - which, अतः - to it, अन्यथा - opposed.

12. Constancy in Self-knowledge, perception of the end of true knowledge; this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

In this concluding stanza of this section, explaining the various essential qualifications in a seeker, the Lord adds to the already explained list of eighteen qualifications two more

items “constancy in Self-knowledge” and “understanding the end of true Knowledge”.

Consistency in Self-Knowledge.—The Knowledge of the Self is to be lived and not to be merely learnt. If Self is one everywhere and the Self alone is real, the seeker should try to live as the Self on all his personality layers. This consistency of living the spiritual knowledge in all the levels of one's contacts with the world outside is one of the unavoidable practices a seeker should always keep up.

Understanding the end of True-Knowledge.—To remember constantly the goal of our endeavour is to add more enthusiasm to our activities. Sincerity of purpose in and undying devotion to any endeavour can be had only if the seeker is thrilled by the vision of the goal that he has to reach. Thus the end should be kept in view. Liberation (*Moksha*) from all our imperfections and limitations is the goal striven for, by all spiritual seekers. These attributes* are declared here to be “Knowledge” because they are conducive to the realisation of the Self.

A train in full steam waiting for the signal at a platform is generally described as “Madras is ready to go”. In the language of the Railway Station, it is usual to say—“Delhi is expected”, “Culcutta is late”, “Bombay has left” etc. In each of these cases the train leaving for or coming from these various cities is only meant. Similarly, here, the very qualities are called the “Knowledge” (*Gyan*) because, once these qualities have been fully developed, the mind so cultivated, becomes the ready vehicle to go forward and reach the goal of Pure Knowledge of the Self.

* From ‘Humility’ in Stanza 7 to “Perception of the Goal” in Stanza 11,

“ *What is that has to be known by the Knowledge?* ” In answer to this question it is said :

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ १३ ॥

13. *jneyam yat tat pravaksyami
yaj jnatvaamrtam ashnute
anadimat param brahma
na sat tan na sad ucyate*

ज्ञेयम् - Has to be known, यत् - which, तत् - that
प्रवक्ष्यामि - (I) will declare, यत् - which, ज्ञात्वा -
knowing, अमृतम् - immortality, अश्नुते - (one)
attains to, अनादिमत् - the beginningless, परम् -
supreme, ब्रह्म - Brahman, न - not, सत् - being, तत् -
that, न - not, असत् - non-being, उच्यते - is called.

13. I will declare which has to be known knowing
which one attains to immortality, the beginn-
ingless supreme Brahman, called neither being
nor non-being.

After explaining the previous section of five stanzas the various secondary or auxiliary causes of knowledge, here, the Lord promises that He will explain what is to be known by this Knowledge. There are critics who blame that in this portion of the Geeta, though the teacher Krishna promises that He will explain “ *what is to be known* ”, He does not directly say so ; but merely gives an elaborate description of what the *result* would be of such a Knowledge. This criticism is unfair. The glorification of the result of *Gyan* can create in the hearer a greater desire to realise it.

Knowing which one attains the Immortal:—Mortality is the destiny of matter. Identifying with the finite the Immortal Spirit recognises Itself to have been conditioned by matter and comes to suffer the delusory sense of finitude and mortality. To rediscover the Spiritual Nature in itself and to live that glory is to end all concepts and experience of death, and enter a field of joyous Immortality, which is the very nature of the Spirit. To realise the Spiritual Nature is the goal, and for the accomplishment of which our inner equipments of meditation are to be properly tuned up by the disciplines described just now.

Anadimatparam:—There are some who split this word into two as *Anadi*, and *Matparam* wherein '*Matparam*' should mean "that in relation to which I am the Supreme". In such case the two words would together mean, 'Brahman is beginningless and I am its *Para-sakthi*, the Supreme energy, called Vasudeva'. This is not a happy explanation since it is not in the spirit of the theme or of the discussion in the stanza. It is intended here to expound the nature of Brahman by denying all specific qualities.

A direct meaning would be to take the word as such and translate it as "without beginning, the Highest Brahman". Beginning can start only with the beginning of time. Time is itself a created factor. Therefore Brahman, which is a substratum for all, must be existent even before Time. Thus, the Supreme is always considered as "beginningless".

The Supreme Consciousness, which is the illuminator of all experiences and which exists transcending all realms of experience, cannot be caught within the web of our perceptions—It being the very Perceiving Principle in all equipments. With reference to It everything else is an object.

It is the one Subject, and since it cannot be perceived, felt or thought of It is not said to be existent (*Sat*).

Nor can Truth be defined as non-existent, such as the sky-flower or man's tail, for, It manifests as the world. Therefore, Truth can be defined only as "neither *Sat* nor *Asat*". The Supreme Brahman cannot be characterised either positively or negatively. *

Shankara says that "Brahman cannot be existent" (*Sat*) as it belongs to no genus, nor possesses any qualities; but at the same time It shows Itself to be not '*asat*' by manifesting Itself through living bodies".

In fact these concepts of "*Sat*" and "*Asat*" are judgments of the human mind and intellect. The Consciousness that illumines these judgments is the Self. The illuminator and the illumined cannot be one and the same. Therefore, the one subject, the Brahman, as opposed to all objects, cannot be either Existent or non-Existent, because '*Sat*', and '*Asat*' are two types of thought-waves and the Self illumines them both. The Brahman is "nor being nor No-being" is all that the scripture can dare to declare.

Describing this All-pervading Self-conscious Principle we have the following stanzas :

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १४ ॥

14. *Sarvatahpanipadam tat*
sarvatoksisiromukham
sarvatahsrutimal loke
sarvam avrtya tisthati

* Refer Brahadaranyakopanishad III — Stanzas 9 to 26 and also Swamiji's Discourses on Taittiriyanishad II — 4-1.

सर्वतः - Everywhere, पाणिपादम् - with hands and feet, तत् - that, सर्वतः - everywhere. अक्षिशिरो-मुखम् - with eyes, head and mouth, सर्वतः - everywhere, श्रुतिमत् - with ears, लोके - in the world, सर्वम् - all, आवृत्य - having enveloped, तिष्ठति - exists.

14. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, he exists in the world, enveloping all.

With hands and feet everywhere:—To describe an unmanifest power to the comprehension of lesser students it is easier when the unknown principle is defined in terms of the known. The hands and legs of the living creatures, though they are made up of inert matter, they seem to be quite conscious and vital in their movements. This Principle of Consciousness functioning behind them all, everywhere, is one and the same Self and so the Supreme Brahman is indicated as that “possessing hands and feet everywhere”.

Every eye, head and mouth functioning in the world are all because of the Life that pulsates in them. Life is one everywhere. Therefore, that Life principle which is described here as “*everywhere possessing eyes and ears and mouths*”. All activities of perception, feeling and thinking are successively pursued only so long as Life presides over the body, and, therefore, the one Life is defined here as “*everywhere possessing eyes, etc.*”

That exists pervading all:—This Principle of Consciousness if it is defined as functioning through known physical equipments, the student may doubt that Life, like stars studding the sky, expresses itself only wherever there are

equipments functioning. To remove this fallacious idea it is rightly said here that the Truth, the principle of Consciousness “exists pervading all”. This stanza is reminiscent of a famous hymn to the Cosmic-man (*Purusha Sukta*) in the Rig Veda. §

Continuing the description of the Eternal Truth the Lord says :

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ १५ ॥

15. *Sarvendriyagunabhasam
sarvendriyavivarjitam
asaktam sarvabhrrccaiva
nirgunam gunabhoktr ca*

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासम् - Shining by the functions of all senses, सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् - (yet) without the senses, असक्तम् - unattached, सर्वभृत् - (yet) supporting all, च - and, एव - even, निर्गुणम् - devoid of qualities, गुणभोक्तृ - (yet) experiencer of the qualities, च - and-

15. Shining by the functions of all the senses, yet without the senses ; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, yet their experiencer.

One of the ways of defining the indefinable Supreme, the Subject in the seeker himself, is to indicate It in a language of contradiction, which without confusing the intellect tickles it to a special kind of activity and renders

§ Refer Svetasvatara Upanishad : 3 to 16

it capable of intuitively realising the Eternal. The language of contradiction is the characteristic feature in all the scriptural text books. The hasty readers of the Scriptures quote these lines to justify their scepticism or atheistic tendencies. The stanza under review is met with in the Upanishads also. *

“Seeming to possess the functions of all senses yet devoid of all senses”—The Self in us while functioning through our equipment, the sense-organs, conditioned by them looks as though it has all the sense-organs. But when we analyse we have to admit in ourselves that the sense-organs are material and that they decay and perish, while the Consciousness . . . functioning in and through them, providing each of them with its own individual faculty. is Eternal, and Changeless. The Truth while functioning through the sense-organs looks as though possessing them. But in fact It has not in Itself these faculties

Electricity is not the light in the bulb, nor the heat in the heater; yet while functioning through the bulb or a heater, conditioned by them, Electricity looks as though it is light or that it is fire.

“Detached yet upholding all”: This relationship of “detached support” is not too easy to understand to the new initiate. But it is generally brought within our comprehension, by the great teachers of our country through analogies. No wave is all the ocean; all the waves put together are not also the entire ocean. We cannot say the ocean is attached to the waves since the ocean is the very nature of

* Swetaswatara Upanishad 3-17.

† “Unseen seer, unheard hearer . . . etc
Brahadaranyakopanishad.

the waves ; and though detached all waves are always supported by none other than the ocean itself. Cotton is in all cloth ; cloth is not cotton. And yet, it is the cotton in the cloth that supports the cloth.

Similarly, the world of plurality is not the Consciousness. Yet the Consciousness supports it. Between the ghost and the post no attachment is ever possible, and yet the post alone is the support of the ghost— as the waking mind alone can support the dreams.

“ *Without Gunas yet enjoying all Gunas* ” : The moods and influences under which human minds come to play and experience themselves are called ‘ *Gunas* ’. * These are influences that govern the mind and yet they are the objects of realisation or perception for the Conscious Self. A live mind alone can experience these influences but Life itself is the illuminator of these influences. The Consciousness conditioned by the mind is the Ego (*Jiva*) and that is the experiencer (*Bhoktr*) of the *Guna*. Unconditioned by the mind, in Its own nature It is the Absolute.

Thus in the stanza the Self as the Absolute is described as beyond sense-organs, mind and intellect detached from everything and without any relation to the various *Gunas*.

But the same Self conditioned by the sense-organs looks as though possessing them all, proves as though It is the sustainer of them all and expresses Itself as though It is the experiencer of all *Gunas*,

Not only this much but the Self, functioning thus in an individual, is one Self in all.

* *Sattva* (unactivity), *Rajas* (activity) and
Tamas (inactivity)

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ १६ ॥

16 *bhair antas ca bhutanam*

acaram caram eva ca

suksmatvat tad avijneyem

durastham ca ntike ca tat

बहि - Without, अन्तः - within, च - and, भूतानाम् of (all) beings, अचरम् - the unmoving, चरम् - the moving, एव - also, च - and, सूक्ष्मत्वात् - because of its subtlety, तत् - that, अविज्ञेयम् - unknowable, दूरस्थम् - is far, च - and, तत् - that.

16. Without and within (all) beings, the unmoving and also the moving; because of its subtlety unknowable; and near and far away is That.

The all-pervasiveness of the Principle of Consciousness is indicated here in the inimitable style borrowed from the Upanishads.

Without and within all things: The Conscious Principle that bursts Itself into activity at the various individualised equipments is all-pervading; and, therefore, in an unmanifest condition. It is present even where no special equipment is available. Even though we can listen to our National Radio Broadcast only through available Receiving Sets we cannot say that there is none of those electrical sound-waves in places where there are no receiving sets. Where there is a body, mind, and intellect ready to function, there no doubt is the expression of Consciousness. But Consciousness is All-pervading not only within the equipment but even outside it.

The phrase quoted can also be interpreted as ‘*without the beings, and yet within them also*’. Something like this: the ocean is without the waves and is something other than the waves, and yet, the very mass of each wave is nothing but the ocean itself.

“*Moving and Unmoving*”. All that moves of its own volition is alive; and that which has no motion falls under the category of the inert. This phrase also is sometimes explained as “*Unmoving and yet Moving*”, wherein the Truth, in Its Absolute nature though motionless—there is no place where It can move, since It is All—yet, conditioned by the things moving It looks as though It has movement. *Sitting* in a bus you can *travel* a long distance; yourself only sitting. The bus travels and, therefore, in yourself there is no motion; but you, conditioned by (meaning, carried by) the bus, are the traveller.

If thus there is an Eternal, All-perfect, Principle revelling as the very core in our personality, which is not only within but which is everywhere, without which no activity is ever possible, and so even in activity It is manifested—and yet how is it that we are not able to perceive It, or feel It, or intellectually comprehend it? The Stanza is replying “*because of its subtlety, incomprehensible*”.

The grosser the thing, the more perceptible it is. Earth can be smelt, can be tasted, can be seen, can be heard. Water cannot be smelt, Fire cannot be tasted. Air cannot be seen. Space has only sound as its property; and we know it is very difficult for many of us even to comprehend the subtlest of the gross things, *Akasha*.

Cause is always subtler than the effect. Space itself being a gross product must have a cause. That which is

the cause for *Akasha* is the Eternal Substratum from which the entire Elements have arisen. Consciousness being thus the subtlest of the subtle, pervading even the *Akasha*, It is incomprehensible to the gross equipments of thought, feeling and perception.

It is far and near · Limited and conditioned things can be defined by its location in space as “ here ” or “ there ”. And measuring its distance towards the observer we can say it is *near* or *far*. But that which is All-pervading must be one which is at once “ here ” and “ there ”. And, therefore, it is *near and far*. This phrase also has been sometimes interpreted as “ *Far and yet near* ” *. “ Far ”: In its Transcendental Absolute nature the Truth is far away from all the hallucinations of names and forms, which in their aggregate constitute the Universe, but at the same time as existence, Truth exists in every name and form.

In short, the stanza in its staggering beauty of contradiction shakes the reader from his intellectual complacency and whips him to sit up and reflect to realise that the Absolute Reality is at once transcendent and immanent.

This Brahman which can be realised within ourselves as Self is one and the same in all and revels as the Self in all is explained below . —

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतमर्तुं च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १७ ॥

* Read Swamiji's “ Discourses on Isavasyopanishad ” stanzas 4 and 5.

17. *avibhaktam ca bhutesu
vibhaktam iva ca sthitam
bhutabhartr ca taj jneyam
grasisnu prabhavisnu ca*

अविभक्तम् - Undivided, च - and, भूतेषु - in beings,
विभक्तम् - divided, इव - as if, च - and, स्थितम् - exist-
ing, भूतभर्तृ - the supporter of beings, च - and, तत्-
that, ज्ञेयम् - to be known, ग्रसिष्णु - devouring, प्रभ-
विष्णु - generating, च - and.

17. And undivided, yet He exists as if divided in
beings; That is to be known as the supporter
of beings; He devours and He generates.

“*Undivided and yet in beings It exists as if divided*”:
Electricity is All-pervading and yet conditioned by the bulb
it manifests as efflorescence at the filament. So too,
though the *Paramatman* is All-pervading, It individualises
Itself as special manifestations only at points where equip-
ments are available. Though space is one, room-space,
pot-space etc., could manifest, seemingly conditioned by
the four walls of the room or the pot.

“*It is the supporter of all, devouring as well as generat-
ing them*”: The post is the supporter of the ghost. It
creates the ghost vision and devours it. The earth is the
supporter of all plants. It creates and it devours them all.
The ocean is a supporter of all waves: waves are born from
the ocean and they are devoured by the same ocean. Simi-
larly, the Truth is that solid Omnipotent Substratum on
which is projected the world of plurality by the deluded
mind and intellect; and when the mind and intellect are
transcended, the vision of *samsar* gets devoured in the very

experience of the Tranquil, just as, on waking the dream merges into the essence of the waker's mind.

It is to be known: The theme of all the discussions in the previous stanzas* was "that which is the knowable". This is to be known by a mind that has been prepared for it through the disciplines advocated in an earlier section

If there be thus an All-pervading Truth ever present in us and if this Self we cannot perceive or experience it must surely be a Principle of Darkness. No! Listen!

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ ॥ १८ ॥

18. *jyotīsam api taj jyotiś
tamasah param ucyate
jñānam jñeyam jñānagamyam
hrdī sarvasya viśthitam*

ज्योतिषाम् - Of lights, अपि - even, तत् - that, ज्योतिः - light, तमसः - from darkness, परम् - beyond उच्यते - is said (to be), ज्ञानम् - knowledge, ज्ञेयम् - that which is to be known, ज्ञानगम्यम् - the goal of knowledge, हृदि - in the heart, सर्वस्य - of all, विष्ठितम् - seated.

18 That, the light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness ; knowledge, the knowable, the goal of knowledge, seated in the heart of all.

* Stanza 13 onwards in XIII

Brahman the illuminator in all, is the one Consciousness by which everything is known intellectually, realised intuitively and experienced practically. Since the Consciousness in us brings our various experiences within our understanding and knowledge, it is generally compared with light. To see an object it is not only sufficient that the object is in line with a healthy pair of eyes but the object must be bathed in a medium of light. Taking this experience in the outer world of cognition as an illustrative analogy, within us too we must have some "Light" to illumine, since we can see and have a knowledge of the different types of emotions and thoughts that arise and exist in our inner world. This Light of Wisdom by which we become aware of our own mental and intellectual inward conditions at any given moment is called the "Light" of the Soul or the Self, the Consciousness.

In the "Light" of Consciousness every thought is brilliantly lit in our awareful life. Thus it has become a spiritual tradition to call the Consciousness as "Light".

The moment the student comes across such an expression he is apt to misunderstand it as the light he has experienced in the world. The brilliancy of the light experienced in the outer world belongs to the realm-of-objects and it cannot be the Subject that is conscious of it. Therefore, it is necessary that the teacher should indicate in some way what exactly is meant by such familiar terms as "the Illumination of the Soul", "the Effulgence of the Self", "the Incandescence of the Consciousness".

Light, even of lights: To indicate the Subject, we have to negate the entire field-of-objects. Sources of light such as the sun, moon, stars, lightning or even fire, are described to have any illumination at all in the blinding luminosity

of the Self¹. Therefore Krishna indicates that the Self in each is the “Light” which illumines all other perceptible and *experientable* lights. Even the sun, though it has got light of its own, it is immaterial to the living world of beings if the Consciousness in them does not illumine the sun. If I am not aware, but I am told by some wise-looking sage that I have a pair of horns it does not matter to me, because, it is not available for my enjoyment, nor is it useful in my life, so long as I am not aware of it. My world can give me my quota of desired joys and pains only when I am conscious of it. Light as a principle manifested can serve in my world only when it comes under my awareness. Thus, all sources of light are illumined by my Consciousness. Therefore, the Self is indicated as the subject that experiences the entire world of objectified light.

That is said to be beyond darkness: Even after the indication that the Self is Consciousness that illumines all other Lights of the world, the impression of Light as an object of our experience is so powerful in our finite intellect that the average student can still retain only his “relative concept” of light. In the world outside light in its empirical sense is that which we comprehend as a contrast to darkness. If there were no nights there would have been no days; in the sun there is no meaning for the word light, since the sun knows no darkness. Thus, to indicate the Absolute nature of the Infinite “Light” of the Soul, Krishna says here that it is beyond the concept of darkness: it is Absolute Light: the Consciousness.

Even to say that there is darkness we must be conscious of darkness. The “Light” of awareness is so subtle and

* “Na Tatra Suryo Bhadi... ..(Kathopanishad.)

Absolute that it illumines not only the various sources of light in the world but also the experience of darkness. That which thus illumines both light and darkness must be a factor that transcends both these experiences. Therefore, the Spirit is indicated as that which transcends even darkness.

The second line indicates that the Spirit is (a) Knowledge (*Gyan*) (b) the one thing to be known (*Gneyam*) and (c) the goal of all knowledge (*Gyana-Gamyam*). In short, this is the final experience that is to be gained, for which we have prepared ourselves through the moral perfections such as “humility” etc;† have tried to concentrate upon the knowable;‡ and this is the point-of-concentration for a head and a heart that have been already disciplined for this final flight to the beyond. The Consciousness that transcends our experiences, which illumines our life, is the very goal in all spiritual endeavours, at all times and everywhere.

Dwelling in the heart of all: If thus there is an Infinite Light of Knowledge to be known—without which life is impossible; in the presence of which alone can all experiences come to have a meaning and an existence—then this Infinite Goal is certainly to be acquired and possessed. Where am I to seek? What pilgrimage must I take? Am I capable of making an expedition? Probably I am not in possession of it today as it must be something to be experienced yonder, in some unknown and impossible time and place. To negate all such misconceptions, the staggering truth, has been vividly declared here, that this Infinite

† Chapter XIII—6 to 11.

‡ Chapter XIII 12 to 17.

dwells in the hearts of all. Philosophically heart means that area in the mental zone from where the noble and pious thoughts spring forth. In an atmosphere of goodness, when the intellect steadily contemplates upon that “Light” that lies beyond darkness—the Absolute non-dual Self that exists, transcending all but at once immanent in its subtle all-pervading nature—It can be contacted and realised and, therefore, heart is considered as the dwelling place of the Self.

The Consciousness functioning in the seekers’ mind and intellect, if lived and experienced by Itself that must give the experience of the Infinite, just as by knowing the composition of a minute particle of salt, the entire world of Sodium Chloride is understood.

Seek the “Light” through devotion: Here follows a concluding remark for the theme discussed so far.

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।

मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ॥ १९ ॥

19. *iti ksetram tatha jnanam
jneyam co ktam samasatah
madbhakta etad vijnaya
madbhavayo papadyate*

इति - Thus, क्षेत्रम् - the field, तथा - as well as, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, ज्ञेयम् - the knowable, च - and, उक्तम् - have been stated, समासतः - briefly, मद्भक्तः - my devotee, एतत् - this, विज्ञाय - knowing, मद्भावाय - to my being, उपपद्यते - enters.

19. Thus the Field, as well as the knowledge and the knowable have been briefly stated. My devotee thus knowing, enters into My Being.

What has been described in this chapter so far is the whole doctrine, the doctrine of the Vedas, taught in brief as the Doctrine of the Geeta. The *Field* described above* beginning with the 'Great Elements' and ending with 'Firmness'; *Knowledge* comprising the moral and ethical rules ordering our right relationship with the world †, starting with 'Humility' and ending with 'the perception of the end of knowledge' and the *knowable* described just now ‡: these have been briefly discoursed upon.

Now the question is who among the seekers is really fit for this great Knowledge. It is prescribed by the Lord that His "*devotees alone are fit for My State*". Devotion here is not merely an emotional surrender in love unto the Lord, but an intellectual apprehension of the Truth through a correct discrimination between the 'Field' and 'the Knower-of-the-Field'. One who is able to recognise the one Vasudeva who is the vitalising Conscious Principle in all Fields of matter envelopments, he is the true devotee "who is fit for My State" (*Mat Bhava*).

The Field and the Knower-of-the-Field together in their combination provide us with the one womb for the entire universe.

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्वयनादि ऊभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥ २० ॥

प्रकृतिम् - Matter, पुरुषम् - spirit, च - and, एव - even, विद्धि - know, अनादि - beginningless, उभौ - both अपि - also, विकारान् - modifications, च - and, गुणान् - qualities, च - and, एव - even, विद्धि - know, प्रकृतिसम्भवान् - born of Prakriti.

* XIII 5 & 6

† XIII 7

‡ XIII 2-7

20. *prakṛtiṁ puruṣam caī va
viddhy anadī ubhāv apī
vikāraṁs ca guṇaṁs caī va
viddhi prakṛtisambhavaṁ*

20. Know thou that Matter and Spirit are both beginningless; and know thou also that all modifications and qualities are born of Prakṛiti.

Earlier Kṛṣṇa in his Geeta discourse had described* the world of Matter (*Prakṛiti*) falling into two classifications, the Higher and the Lower. Both these are explained in this chapter as the *Knower* and the *Field*. During the discussion of the Higher and the Lower *Prakṛitis*, it was asserted then that they together constitute the source of creation. Continuing that very same thought in this Chapter, in a fresh dress of phraseology as the “Field” and its “Knower,” it is repeated that they together constitute the womb of all beings.

Matter (*Prakṛiti*) and Spirit (*Puruṣa*) are both beginningless. Matter and Spirit are the two aspects of the *Iswara*, the Lord. As the Lord is Eternal, it is but natural that His nature—Matter and Spirit—should also be Eternal, meaning Beginningless. It is these two in their play that project creation, continue to preserve it, and enact the scene of dissolution of their universe. Thus the play of Matter and Spirit is the cause of *Samsar*; and the Substratum for them both is the Lord.

Subjectively, the creative power in me ordered by my *Vasanas* (*Avidya*), when it comes to play in the field of its expression, dynamised by its Knower, projects out a world

* Ch. VII—6

of experience which I maintain and destroy according to the nature, the condition and the qualities governing the Matter-Spirit factors in me.

All forms and qualities, are born of the Spirit. All forms and emanations *Vikaras** which have been already explained† and all qualities (*Gunas*) such as those which express themselves as pleasure, pain, delusion and such other mental states‡ spring from Matter (*Prakriti*). In short, Matter is that out of which all forms and qualities come into existence. All changes and modifications belong to the realm of Matter, and the *Atman* is the Changeless Substratum, in the presence of which all these changes take place (*Kutasthah*).

What then are these forms and qualities which are described here as born of Prakriti?

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥२१॥

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे- In the production of the effect and the cause, **हेतुः** - the cause, **प्रकृतिः** - Prakriti, **उच्यते** - is said (to be); **पुरुषः** - Purusha, **सुख दुःखानाम्** - of pleasure and pain, **भोक्तृत्वे** - in the experience **हेतुः** the cause, **उच्यते** - is said (to be).

21. *karya karana kartrtve
hetuh prakrtir ucyate
purusah sukhaduhkhanam
bhoktrtve hetur ucyate*

* Buddhi, Akankara, Indriyas, Tanmatras, etc.

† In XIII, stanzas 5 and 6.

‡ To be described later on elsewhere in the Geeta.

21. In the production of the effect and the cause, Prakṛiti is said to be the cause; in the experience of pleasure and pain, Puruṣa is said to be the cause.

In the production of cause and effect: The 'effects' mentioned here are thirteen in number which are constituted of the five great elements, the five senses, mind, intellect and *Ahankar*. The macrocosmic gross elements in their *gunas* are themselves represented in the microcosm as the five *Indriyas*. We had discussed this in the description of the Cosmic Form of the Lord.* These sense-organs cannot bring their stimuli of the outer world to the individual personality unless there is a converging point of all the *Indriyas*, called the mind.

In order to respond properly with the stimuli there must be a co-ordinating and understanding, discriminating and reasoning principle that governs the mind; and that principle is the intellect. In the world-of-objects, constituted of the elements, in the realm of the mind and in the responses sent out by the intellect there must be a constant sense of I-ness, born out of the individual's identification with all the above mentioned. This is called the 'Ego'. All these thirteen items together in their aggregate represent the 'effect' (*Kaarana*) mentioned in the stanza.

Reviewers mention that there is yet another reading wherein instead of 'effect' the meaning would be the 'instruments' (*Kaarana*). Both of them would mean the same; since these thirteen constitute in themselves the instruments by which each living creature earns its experiences in life.

* Chapter XI-19.

Prakriti is said to be the cause : All the above mentioned together constitute the world-of-matter. The five elements in their combination become the entire world-of-objects including the body, the senses, sensations and the instrument of judgment. From the five Great Elements down to the Ego, all items enumerated fall together to form the world-of-objects—since all of them can be perceived.

As experiencing pleasure and pain : The subject that perceives—the entire world-of-objects and their reactions upon the ego which is the individual's direct reaction to the world—is the Self. The Light of Consciousness is that which illumines the world-of-objects outside and the instruments of perception, feeling and thought.

Purusha is said to be the cause : The pleasure and pain are the reactions in our intellect. When desirable objects in a conducive pattern reach our life the experience is called 'pleasure'. And the opposite sensations, produced by undesirable objects, is called 'pain'. Every experience in its final analysis is adjudged either as pain or as pleasure. The Awareness in us illumines these. A conscious living of the flow of experiences would have been impossible but for the grace of the Consciousness. Therefore, the Spirit (*Purusha*) is explained here as the cause for the experience in life. In short, *Purusha** is the cause for the *Samsar*. The Spirit functioning in a field as the "Knower" of it is the one who suffers the sorrows of *Samsar*. The one who is

*"Purusha, Jiva, Kshetragna, Bhoktri are all synonymous terms"—Sankara. Anandagiri in his foot notes on this statement of Sankara adds: "The three last terms (Jiva, Kshetragna, Bhoktri) are respectively hinted at to show that the Purusha, here, referred to is not the Paramatman or the inner Self, but it is the intelligent (Chetana) principle in a conditioned being."

standing in the sun suffers the heat; if he retires to the shade, he enjoys the shadow.

Thus, it is said in the above that the Knower-of-the-Field (Purusha) is the enjoyer of the pleasure and pain—Samsar. What is this Samsar due to?—the Lord says :—

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।

कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ २२ ॥

पुरुषः - Purusha, **प्रकृतिस्थः** - seated in Prakriti, **हि** - indeed, **भुङ्क्ते** - enjoys, **प्रकृतिजान्** - born of Prakriti, **गुणान्** - qualities, **कारणम्** - the cause, **गुणसंगः** - attachment to the Gunas, **अस्य** - of his, **सदसद्योनिजन्मसु** of birth in good and evil wombs.

22. *purusah prakrtistho hi
bhunkte prakrtijan gunan
karanam gunasango sya
sadasadyonijanmasu*

22. Purusha seated in Prakriti, experiences the qualities born of Prakriti; attachment to the qualities is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

Purusha rests seated in Prakriti : The Pure Spirit has no Samsar. But the Knower-of-the-Field, Purusha, when It identifies with the field (Prakriti) becomes the experiencer. He identifies himself with the body and the senses which are the effects of Prakriti.

He experiences the qualities born of Prakriti : The sensations arising out of the matter envelopments (Prakriti) such

as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, success and failure, etc., these constitute the painful shackles on the "Knower-of-the-Field". The destinies of Matter become the tragic experiences of the Spirit not because they are in the Spirit, but the Spirit unnecessarily comes to make an unhealthy contact, through its own identification with the realm of sorrow.

He not only comes to experience the joys and sorrows in life but develops a blind attachment with them and these are "*the cause for its birth in good or evil wombs*". "As its desire so is its will" is a scriptural declaration of an eternal truth.* While living in the world the "Knower-of-the-Field" comes to experience the pleasures and joys interpreted by the world of Matter and gets itself attached with them, and thereby develops residual impressions (*Vasanas*). And for the fulfilment of them the Knower orders fresh vehicles in conducive fields where it can eke out its self-ordered satisfactions through vivid experiences.

The Spirit, Eternally joyous and Infinitely all-full, when It orders a field and identifies Itself with it, becomes the "Knower-of-the-Field" (*Purusha*). The Spirit, as *Purusha*, suffers its own delusory *Samsar*, because, having entered the field in its preoccupation with the world-of-objects and in its clinging attachment to the "Field" it looks as though it has forgotten its own nature. Thus, ignorance (*Avidya*) and attachment with the "Field" are the two causes because of which the *Satchidananda* seems to have fallen to become the miserable, bemoaning, tearful, *Samsarin*. The re-discovery of the Self and the awakening to our spiritual nature would, therefore, be through the path of (a) detach-

* Brihadaranyakopanishad—IV-4 & 5.

ment from the Field and (b) experience of the Real Knowledge. *Vairagya* and *Viveka* are the means for regaining the God in ourselves.

The Lord continues to teach us directly what that saving Knowledge is :—

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ॥ २३ ॥

उपद्रष्टा - The spectator, अनुमन्ता - the permitter
च - and, भर्ता - the supporter, भोक्ता - the enjoyer,
महेश्वरः - the great Lord, परमात्मा - the Supreme
Self, इति - thus, च- and, अपि - also, उक्तः - is called:
देहे - in the body, अस्मिन् - (in) this, पुरुषः - Purusha
परः - Supreme.

23. *upadrasta numanta ca
bharta bhokta mahesvarah
paramatme ti ca py ukto
dehe smin purusah parah*

23. The Supreme Purusha in this body is also called the spectator, the Permitter; the supporter, the enjoyer, the great Lord, and the Supreme Self.

As a contrast to this deluded sorrowful “Knewer-of-the-Field”, *Purusha*, there is the Pure Spirit uncontaminated by the “Field”. The moon in the bucket is the reflected-moon and for every reflection, that dances with the conditions of the reflective surface, there must be a real object. The reflection is always conditioned by the reflecting

medium, while the object reflected is never contaminated by any of the aspects of the reflecting surface. It is completely independent of all conditions.

The “Knower-of-the-Field” is Knowledge or Consciousness conditioned by the “Field”. Naturally, therefore, there must be a knowledge unconditioned, which looks as though conditioned, when it is playing in the realm of its conditionings.

Thus in this stanza, Krishna, for the purpose of his scientific analysis and investigation, mentions of two Purushas, the *Lower* one that has been already described and indicated as the “Knower-of-the-Field”, and the *Higher* one which is the Pure Consciousness, unconditioned by the *Prakriti*. Both of them function “*in this body*”.

This Supreme Self is indicated here in terms of how It looks like in Its silent manifestations when the matter equipment (*Prakriti*) is playing out in its different patterns. When an individual is completely deluded and totally unconscious of the Self, in and through him the Infinite Divine expresses Himself as though He is only an “onlooker” (*Upadrashta*); that is to say when a murderer chops off an innocent victim the Infinite All-powerful Lord expresses through that criminal’s vehicle only as a silent witness of it all (*Upadrashta*). In case, proper actions are undertaken, wherein the mind is in a quite mood, when the individual actor is not totally forgetful of the Self, in such a being the Supreme expresses as a “Permitter” (*Anumantha*).

When proper actions are done, fully conscious of the Self, in a spirit of total surrender to the Lord, in such actions he seems to be the filler (*Bharta*), meaning the ful-

filler. Such actions are filled with success by His grace. He aids, as it were, the fruition of all such activities.

When entirely dedicated unto Him, and the individual is completely a *Yoga-Yukta*, in his Eternal Conscious nature (*Nitya Chaitanya Swaroopa*) It seems to be the very "enjoyer" (*Bhokta*). The stanza concludes by saying that the "great Iswara, the Lord of Lords (*Maheswara*) is otherwise called as the Higher Self in this very same body."

"The one who knows this Higher Self, unconditioned by the "Field", how does he react in life" :

य एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि न स भूयोऽभिजायते ॥ २४ ॥

24. *ya evam vetti purusam
prakrtim ca gunaih saha
sarvatha vartamano pi
na sa bhuyo bhijayate*

यः - Who, एवम् - thus, वेत्ति - knows, पुरुषम् - Purusha, प्रकृतिम् - Prakriti, च - and, गुणैः - qualities सह - with, सर्वथा - in all ways, वर्तमानः - living, अपि - also, न - not, सः - he, भूयः - again, अभिजायते - is born.

24. He who thus knows the Purusha and Prakriti together with the qualities, in whatsoever condition he may be, he is not born again.

In the previous stanza it was said that the identification of the *Purusha* with the "Field" is the cause for Its participation in the tragic destinies of matter. If there were no

contact, indeed, the *Purusha* would have been a mere observer of the world-of-matter without suffering the sorrows of it. But the Infinite comes to play the part of the miserable mortal because of Its own delusory imagination that It is directly conditioned by the mental and the intellectual reactions.

These vivid experiences in the world outside leave impressions; to fulfil which again and again the *Purusha* is born either in the higher wombs of enjoyment or among the lower manifestations to suffer.

But he who has realised in himself (a) that which is the Matter, (b) that which is the Spirit, he who understands (c) how the Spirit, deluded by its own preoccupations, gets identified with matter and behaves as *Purusha*, “Knower-of-the-Field”, and also (d) the mysteries of the *Gunas* under the influences of which the equipments function, he is the one who is called a Man of Wisdom.

To know a thing we must stand apart from it, and so far we are ourselves in any situation we cannot understand it fully. To realise at once the world of objects, the instruments of contact, and their behaviour and qualities, is to stand apart from them all—and that state is to realise the Spirit, the Substratum. Thus to recognise our own nature to be the Absolute, Infinite, Pure Consciousness, is to end all misconceptions (*Avidya*). To one who has thus ended all *Avidya* there is no more any reason for one to get completely identified thereafter with the Field-of-matter. Therefore, it is said that such an individual thereafterwards: “*Whatever be his conduct, he is not born again*”—that is to say no new *Vasanas* can be created in him and the old

Vasanas functioning in the mind and intellect have dropped away from him, since there is no more in him any false ego-centric contact with the world outside.

It is the Jiva that creates more and more *Vasanas* in the mind and through the mind, according to the *Vasanas*, it projects different equipments and different worlds of experiences in order to eke out its own desired quota of joy and pain. That in such an individual of Self-realisation there is no more any *Vasana* left over,* that he will be in an embodiment only so long as this body exists,† that the Knower of the *Brahman* himself becomes the Infinite,‡ and that the accumulated reactions of his actions all perish at the moment of Self-realisation§ are all truths declared by the Upanishads.

“Now there are several paths to Self-Knowledge and they are mentioned here as follows” :

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।

अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥ २५ ॥

25. *dhyanena tmani pasyanti*
kecid atmanam atmana
anye samkhyena yogena
karmayogena ca pare

* “As the soft fibres of the Ishika reeds are burnt in the fire so all his actions are burnt ”...Chandogya Upanishad V-24, 3.

† “For him there is only delay so long as he is not delivered from the present body ”...Chandogya Upanishad VI-14, 2.

‡ “He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman himself”...Mundaka Upanishad III-2, 9.

§ “His deeds perish ”...Mundakopanishad II-2, 8.

ध्यानेन - By meditation, आत्मनि - in the self, पश्यन्ति - behold, केचित् - some, आत्मानम् - the Self, अन्ये - others, सांख्येनयोगेन - by the Yoga of knowledge (by the Sankhya Yoga), कर्मयोगेन - by Karma Yoga, च - and, अपरे - others.

25. Some by meditation behold the self in the self by the self, others by the Yoga of knowledge (by Sankhya Yoga), and others by Karma Yoga.

This realisation of the Self in its pure nature, undressed of all its matter envelopments, is the final goal of spiritual seeking, and there is more than one path prescribed for this Divine achievement. Integration of a human personality must start from the point where an individual finds himself to be. No education can be successful unless the students are given graded lessons.

A totally disintegrated individual must also be given a path that he can easily follow with his restless equipment. Spiritual unfoldment cannot take place merely because of an intellectual appreciation of the theory of perfection. Evolution can actually take place only when a corresponding change in the very subjective life is accomplished. Therefore, an active, intelligent and enthusiastic participation of the seeker in controlling, directing and re-educating his own thought-life is necessary. Hence the difficulty in accomplishing the inward spiritual unfoldment in every individual.

The great scientists of the past, discovering ways of evolving the entire mankind constituted of different types, had evolved various parallel roads all leading to the same goal. Each path is the fittest for the one who is walking in it. No path can be said to be a nobler one than the others.

In a Medical shop there are different medicines ; and each one serves a definite type of patient, and the medicine prescribed for a given disease is the fittest medicine for that patient so long as he continues in his present ailment.

The difference between the various seekers is the difference in their mental equanimity and intellectual equipoise. The lesser paths are mainly meant to purify the inner equipments and when the mind has become steady and concentrated, when the intellect has been redeemed from its wasteful habits of wrong imaginations, then the equipments are ready for the higher flights through the Path of Meditation.

By meditation some behold the Self: Meditation* “ consists in withdrawing by concentration all the sense organs away from their respective sense-objects into the mind, and then the withdrawing of the *Manas* into the inner intelligence, and then contemplating upon the Highest”. It is a continuous and unbroken thought-flow, like a line of flowing oil. In order to pursue this path, naturally the individual must have a dynamic head and heart—both least disturbed by their own subjective defects.

To “ behold ” is not to recognise the Self as an object, which would then mean something against the very assertion of the scriptures. The Self is the Subject ; therefore, the term ‘ behold ’ is used here to mean only an inward experience of a total subjective re-discovery. The experience is so vivid that it is comparable with our unshakable knowledge of anything after we have once seen it ourselves.

By the Self in the Self: The subjective experience of the very core of our personality is accomplished by the head in

* According to Sankara Bhagawatpada.

pure heart. Sankara explains this portion: "By meditation the *Yogins* behold the Self, the pure Consciousness, in the Self (*Buddhi*), by the Self—by their own intelligence, that is, by the *Anthakarana* refined by *Dhvana*". All sincere attempts at meditation steady the mind-and-intellect, and the steady mental-pool of thought, with its passions and *Vasanas* subsided and to an extent even eliminated, provides a clear reflecting surface in which the glory of the Self is seen reflected and recognised intuitively.

One may wonder why the same term is used in indicating the instrument of recognition (*Atmani*), the subject recognising it (*Atmana*) and object recognised (*Atmanam*). The reason is, in the final realisation it is experienced that the intellect, the mind, the seeker and the sought are all in fact nothing other than the Self. The waves, the ripples, the foam are all nothing but the ocean. The dreamer, the dreamt and the dream are all nothing but the waker's own mind. In this sense in our scriptural lore we often find the term '*Atman*' used to indicate even our outer personalities gained in our identifications with the matter envelopments in us—And even, sometimes, the very *Kosas* are indicated by the term *Atman* in some rare context.

This path of quietening the mind, steadying the intellect and with an integrated mind-and-intellect to contemplate steadily upon the transcendental Self is not a path that is available to all as it calls forth certain mental and intellectual perfections, which are not very commonly seen in everyone. Those who have got these qualifications are considered as the highest class of aspirants. The seekers of the best type—who have developed in themselves a sufficient detachment from the sense-objects (*Vairagya*) and a ready discrimination to distinguish the permanent from the

impermanent (*Viveka*)—alone can steadily walk this highest path.

Others by the path of Sankhya-Yoga :—Those who have not got that required amount of steadiness in mind and intellect—not because of any lack of aspiration but wanting in sufficient right understanding of the goal (*Viveka*)-their sense of detachment (*Vairagya*) wanes and waxes. Naturally some times they are good at meditation, but at other times they experience a tremendous amount of restlessness and agitations. To such seekers the only remedy is a more intelligent and enthusiastic study of the *Shastras*. The term '*Sankhya*' means the sequence of logical thoughts through which we reach a definite philosophical conclusion, unassailable by any doubts any more.

And this *Vichar*, since it provides the seeker with a better understanding of the text, and, therefore, a deeper conviction of the goal, will discover for him, in himself, a healthier steadiness of self application and a diviner equipoise in his meditation. Since *Vichar* thus can safely take us to the Yoga of Meditation and help us to establish ourselves therein, the very study of the *Sastra* and reflections upon it (*Sankhya*) is here called '*Yoga*'. That which ultimately takes one to *Yoga* is called *Yoga*, just as a vehicle is often named by the destination to which it is proceeding. "9-20 is Delhi departure time" does not mean that at that time the capital city is packing off from the country and going to the Nicobar islands! It only shows that a train bound for Delhi will be leaving at that scheduled time. The seekers who are not fit for steadily following the path of deep meditation are advised to steam themselves up by the *Sankhya Yoga*: by the path of deep study and reflection.

Others again by Karma Yoga :—To another type of seekers even study of the *Sastra* and effective reflections upon it become almost impossible because their inward personality is so much poisoned by the existing hosts of sensuous *Vasanas*. In such a state of mental agitation no dynamic and effective meditation is possible. The instrument is not fit for it and, therefore, the selfless activity in a spirit of *Yagna* is prescribed* for him. When the Path of Action is pursued for a time as contemplated in the *Geeta*† the existing *Vasanas* exhaust and more and more quietude and tranquillity are experienced by the seeker. A mind thus steadied is fit for delving into the deeper significance of the *mantras* and when the conviction of the goal is intensified by the individual, as a result of these reflections, his meditation gathers a momentum and a dash, taking him to the highest peaks.

In short, seekers of highest *Sattwic* qualities need practise only meditation : seekers of slight *Sattwic* temperament, but with a large share of agitations, must develop the “creative stillness” in themselves through the Path of Perfection ; and those who have the largest dose of mental oscillations, created by the *Vasana*-disturbances, they must through *Karma Yoga* develop *Sattwic* traits, nurture and nourish them through reflections, and thus gain enough fuel to *Sattwic* dynamism and steady meditation.

In that case what path is prescribed for those who are completely steeped in Tamas—mental and intellectual inertia? They too are served. Listen :

* Chapter III—Read also the main introduction

† Chapter III-30.

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।

तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ २६ ॥

26. *anye tv evam ajanantah
srutva nyebhya upasate
te pi ca titaranty eva
mrtym srutiparayanah*

अन्ये - Others, तु - indeed, एवम् - thus, अजानन्तः - not knowing, श्रुत्वा - having heard, अन्येभ्यः - from others, उपासते - worship, ते - they, अपि - also, च - and, अतितरन्ति - cross beyond, एव - even, मृत्युम् - death, श्रुतिपरायणाः - regarding what they have heard as the Supreme refuge.

26. Others also, not knowing thus, worship having heard of it from others: they too cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as the supreme refuge.

The previous stanza defines the path that is conducive to the best type of students (*Uitama Adhikaris*) and to the mediocres and weaklings (*Madyama Adhikaris*). To the low class of aspirants too the Geeta Acharya prescribes a path.

Having heard from others :—There are some who are not capable of meditation. They have neither the intellectual capacity to follow the logical thoughts in any philosophy nor have they the necessary inward equipoise to follow the Path of Action. Even such folks can evolve, though they are ignorant of these paths so far described, if only they worship the Principle of Truth on the strength of what they have heard from others.

They too go beyond death :—In case such people are capable of consistently worshipping the Lord as they have been instructed by other devotees, they too can transcend the finite life of plurality and experience the Changeless. The term ‘*death*’ here should not be understood as meaning only the phenomenon of death that happens to a personality expressed in a body. Here we have the term used in its all-embracing significance, indicating in its girth of meaning the total principle-of-change as experienced by any given human mind-and-intellect. So long as we are identified with the body—gross, subtle or causal—the experiences can only be of the finite. To experience the Infinite is to enter the status of Immortality, beyond the thralldom of death.

This stanza while explaining the efficacy of prayer and worship even when unscientifically performed, it is not recommending that all methods are equally efficient, but it is only emphasizing the idea that in the practice of worship correct knowledge shall surely provide a better guarantee of success. If seekers can progress upon the authority of other’s instructions, when they are themselves ignorant, Shankara exclaims: “How much more so then can they progress who can independently appreciate the *Sastra* texts and discriminate?”.

Through these various paths available what exactly is the ultimate goal to be realised : Listen—

यावत्संजायते किञ्चित्सत्त्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ संयोगात्तद्विद्धि भरतर्षभ ॥ २७ ॥

27. *yavat samjayate kimcit
sattvam shtavarajangamam
ksetraksetrajasamyogat
tad viddhi bharatarsabha*

यावत् - Whatever, संजायते - is born, किञ्चित् - any
सत्त्वम् - being, स्थावरजंगमम् - the unmoving and the
moving, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगात् = from the union between
the Field and the Knower of the Field, तत् - that,
विद्धि - know, भरतर्षभ - O best of the Bharatas.

27. Wherever any being is born, the unmoving or the
moving, know thou, O best of the Bharatas,
that it is from the Union between the Field
and the knower of the Field.

All things in the world that are born—both the world
of inert matter (unmoving) and the world of Conscious-
beings (moving)—arise neither from the Field (*Prakriti*) nor
from the Knower-of-the-Field (*Purusha*). The source is from
the marriage between the *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. This com-
bination of Matter and Spirit is not an accomplished nuptial
but it is only a mutual super-imposition*.

In every super-imposition a delusion is recognised upon
a substratum: the ghost on the post. Not only the form,
and all attributes of the ghost come to be projected upon the
post but also the post lends its existence to the non-existent
ghost. As a result of its mutual exchange we find that the
non-existent ghost comes to exist in our experience, while
the existing post becomes a non-existent ghost with illusions
of physical limbs and ghastly behaviours. This process,
which is the trick of the human mind is called mutual super-
imposition. In the Pure Consciousness there is no Field of
Matter. The fields of matter have neither existence nor

* Anyonya Adhyasa: Mutual super-imposition—For more
details read Shankara's exhaustive thesis upon this phenomenon
which he gives in his introduction to Brahmasutra-Bhasya.

sentieney. But the Spirit plays in the Field and becomes the Knower-of-the-Field (*Purusha*) and when this *Purusha* works in *Prakriti* the combination breeds the entire phenomenal universe constituted of the moving and the unmoving.

Through careful discrimination when we successfully discover this play in ourselves the vision of the plurality recedes and we understand that the ultimate Truth is the Substratum on which both *Prakriti* and *Purusha* come to play.

Ordinarily I am a quite man. My heart's passion is endless. When I identify with the passion in my heart, I play in the world as the passionate man and come to perform deeds at which I myself later on regret. Now in this example, the regret, and the regretting-person, the passion and the passionate-entity—all of them revel in me. They all belong to me and I am not they. Yet, when I identify with them I become the perpetrator of the regrettable actions, and the passionate actor in me comes to brood over what had happened, and suffers. Similarly, the Self contains matter possibilities—the Self being *Paripoorna*. To project matter and get Itself identified with it, is to become the *Purusha*, and the *Purusha*, maintaining itself in the field of matter so projected, becomes the source of the entire *Samsar*. With discrimination to closely analyse, with vitality to courageously detach and with heroism to carefully live as an observer of all that is happening within, not allowing ourselves to be abducted away by our own imaginations—is the method of realising the Perfection in ourselves.

This Self which is the Substratum of a given Purusha and Prakriti, is Itself the one Self everywhere is indicated below :

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ २८ ॥

28. *samam sarvesu bhutesu
tishtantham paramesvaram
vinasyatsv avinasyantam
yah pasyati sa pasyati*

समम् - Equally, सर्वेषु-(in) all, भूतेषु - in beings, तिष्ठन्तम् - existing, परमेश्वरम् - the Supreme Lord, विनश्यत्सु - among the perishing, अविनश्यन्तम् - the unperishing, यः - who, पश्यति - sees, सः - he, पश्यति - sees.

28. He sees, who sees the Supreme Lord existing equally in all beings, the unperishing within the perishing.

*He sees who sees the Supreme Lord:—*The Supreme Lord (*Parameswara*) on whom the Field and the Knower-of-the Field come to play the game of delusory identification, and consequently the endless sorrows of *Samsar*, is an Eternal Principle of Pure Existence. The one factor that *binds* all the waves of the ocean together, that *exists* in all waves and *supports* the entire self-destroying and mutually procreating play of the waves, is the ocean. Similarly, the Substratum that supports all is the Supreme Lord “remaining the same in all beings”.

*The undying in the dying:—*To a superficial observer, world is a field of perpetual change, constant death. Nothing remains the same for even a moment. Things

change themselves and, naturally, their relationships with each other also change. This welter of change is what we observe in the world of perceptions, in the realm of feelings and in the field of thoughts. In terms of this experienced world of plurality, and their everchanging nature, the Absolute Truth is indicated as the Changeless Platform upon which these changes are staged.

Everything in the phenomenal world is subject to modifications such as birth, growth, disease, decay and death. The entire chain of modifications starts with birth; that which is born alone can grow and ultimately passing through the various changes reach the final change in death. When the Supreme Lord is indicated here as the Deathless, all other modifications are denied in Him. This Changeless Consciousness that supports all changes is the undying Principle that illumines the dying world of plurality. The gold in the ornaments is the only constant factor; out of the same bar of gold various types of ornaments are made and destroyed to make other types of ornaments. The shape and the size of the ornaments change, but the changeless factor in them all, is the pure gold.

He who is capable of recognising the Supreme Lord (*Parameswara*) who revels the same everywhere as the Pure Spirit in all names and forms, who changes not while the outer equipments change, he alone is the one who sees what is to be really seen. In this stanza the term 'seeing' is a term borrowed from our ordinary world of perception but used in the sense of "the spiritual Self-realisation".

The physical world is recognised and perceived through our physical equipments. Emotions in the world around us are felt and recognised by our minds. The world of ideas is com-

prehended by our intellect. The Spiritual Substratum in the universe of beings and things can be apprehended only from the spiritual centre in ourselves. Just as the *eyes* cannot see *thoughts*, so too the equipments of perceptions, feelings and thoughts cannot recognise the Spirit that is subtler than them, that lies transcending all of them.

*He alone sees who sees this :—*This is a very powerful and direct assertion. Everybody sees ; but not the Real. Wrong perceptions indicate maladjustments in the instruments of perception. Hallucinations and illusions, false imaginations and delusory projections of the mind veil the reality of a thing observed. Therefore, here the *Yogeswara* asserts that he who recognises this harmony of one Truth, this thread of Reality, that holds all experiences together, which is one in all beings, is the Truth to be realised in the world. Others see, and yet, do not see ; he alone sees who realises this Supreme Lord that is the Imperishable.

To eulogise this Right Knowledge by indicating the result of its possession, the Lord continues :—

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ २९ ॥

29. *samam pasyan hi sarvatra
sama vasthitam isvaram
na hinasty atmana tmanam
tato yati param gatim*

समम् - Equally, पश्यन् - seeing, हि - indeed, सर्वत्र - everywhere, समवस्थितम् - equally dwelling, ईश्वरम् - the Lord, न - not, हिनस्ति - destroys, आत्मना - by the self, ततः - then, याति - goes, पराम् - the highest, गतिम् - the goal.

29. Because he who sees the same Lord everywhere equally dwelling, destroys not the self by the self, therefore, he goes to the highest goal.

Vedanta preaches not so much the negation of the world as it advocates a re-evaluation of the things, beings and happenings constituting the world. Generally we perceive our own pet ideas and emotions coloured by our own unsteady understanding and changing emotions. To see the world not through these equipments but with the clear eye of wisdom is to recognise perfection and bliss, divinity and sanctity, in the very drab and dreary world of today, amidst its own sorrows and ugliness. Erroneous perception of Reality through maladjusted equipments is the perception of the world which in its turn is throttling the individual so perceiving it.

Through the refracting medium of matter-envelopments when the Pure Consciousness looks upon Itself, It perceives, as it were, a world of plurality, and the pluralistic world grins and dances, whistles, shrieks and howls—ever ugly, stinking and sweating—according to the mad changes that take place in the very equipments (*Field*) through which the ego (Knower-of-the-Field) happens to gaze on. To re-discover the spiritual Reality, the Supreme Lord, in and through this horrid welter of change and sorrow is to end all our agitations and unprofitable aims and exertions, “*for he sees the Lord dwelling in every place alike*”. Such an individual, in his own experienced wisdom, no more suffers from sorrow or fear. When the post is seen the dread created by the ghost is ended.

He destroys not the Self by the Self:—Earlier the Lord has explained when exactly the Self becomes the enemy of

the Self.* Whenever the lower ego-centric individuality is not available for the sure guidance of the higher principle of wisdom in ourselves, the lower becomes an enemy to ourselves. When a vehicle is no more under one's own control the very vehicle, which would have been otherwise of service, becomes, as it were, an engine of destruction for the same individual. Similarly, when the lower in us is not available for the guidance of the higher, the former turns out to be an enemy to the latter. And in an individual who has come to recognise and experience the one *Parameswara* that revels everywhere, in him, as a result of this experience, the lower cannot fight against or shadow the glory of the higher.

*Therefore he goes to the highest goal :—*The true nature of the Self working inimical to each other as explained in the above phrase takes place either due to the non-apprehension of the Reality (*Agyan*) or due to the mis-apprehension (*Mitya-Gyan*) arising out of the non-apprehension. The non-apprehension of the one *Parameswara* everywhere makes an individual act in the world in such a way as to destroy the glory of the Self in all other living beings. Thus he becomes a source of sorrow to the community of living beings around. The non-apprehension (*Agyan*) hurls us a step ahead, in which not only that we do not recognise the one Eternal Divine everywhere, but we identify ourselves with the body, and the mind and behave as though they alone are the real and as a consequence, sensuality, materialistic pursuits and selfish satisfactions become the only worthwhile object in life pursuing which we destroy ourselves and others. The state an individual gains when both these non-apprehension (*Agyan*) and mis-apprehension (*Mitya-Gyan*) are

* Chapter VI, stanzas 5 & 6.

ended, that Absolute experience, is the experience of the highest goal, and, therefore, “He goes to the highest”.

Individuals act differently and, therefore, the Parameswara playing behind each individual must be a separate Self. To contradict this concept of plurality in the Self, it is said :

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥ ३० ॥

30 prakrtyai va ca karmani
kriyamanani sarvasah
yah pasyati tatha tmanam
akartaram sa pasyati

प्रकृत्या - By prakriti, एव-alone, च = and, कर्माणि-
actions, क्रियमाणानि - being performed, सर्वशः - all,
यः - who, पश्यति - sees, तथा - so also, आत्मानम् - the
self, अकर्तारम् - actionless, सः - he, पश्यति - sees.

30. He sees, who sees that all actions are performed by
Prakriti alone, and that the Self is actionless.

If a caravan of motor vehicles, manufactured by different companies with different horse-powers, at different periods of history, is put on the road, the performance of each vehicle will be unique. Thereby we shall not come to conclude that the petrol in each vehicle is of certain typical potency. The same electrical energy illumines different electric bulbs manifesting different intensities of light at different points. The electricity is one, the petrol is one and yet the performance in the latter and the light manifested in the former are different from equipment to equipment because of the

very quality of the equipment. This analogy can explain the wonderful idea expressed in the stanza under review.

Prakriti alone performs all actions :—Matter is the equipment that orders the types of action that should manifest. If the mind is bad, life expressed through it will also be bad. All actions are according to the type of desires retained by the intellect. Thus, in the presence of the Spirit the equipments (*Prakriti*) function, and the Self (*Atman*) functioning in the field, called as the “Knower-of-the-Field” (*Purusha*), acts in the world outside. The “Knower-of-the-Field” minus the “Field”, there is no activity for the “Field”, nor is there any activity for the Self itself.

The Self not acting :—The Self is the All-pervading, the Perfect and as such there is no desire in It. And where desires have ended actions are impossible. In the Infinite there is no action and the very many reasons as to why there is no action in the Self, will be described presently.*

He who is capable of thus recognising how his own vehicles function and realising that the Self in him is ever actionless he alone is the right perceiver who is recognising and experiencing the “Imperishable amidst the perishable”. “He sees who sees”.† The manifestations of individuals are different from person to person, because of the difference in the composition and make-up of the various equipments (*Upadhies*) and at the destruction of them, all differences

* Stanza 32.

† “Let him know that Maya is Prakriti and that the great Lord is possessor of Maya -- Swetaswaaraopanisad, 4, 10.

merge to express the one Infinite experience, the Supreme Lord.*

While explaining the Self as the source of all beings the Lord indicates the state of a man who can declare that he had the full experience of the Infinite One :—

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।

तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥ ३१ ॥

31. *yada bhutaprthagbhavam
ekastham anupasyati
tata eva ca vistaram
brahma sampadyate tada*

यदा - When, भूतपृथग्भावम् - the whole variety of beings, एकस्थम् - resting in the one, अनुपश्यति - sees, ततः - from that, एव - alone, च - and, विस्तारम् - the spreading, ब्रह्म - Brahman, संपद्यते - (he) becomes तदा - then.

31. When he (a man) sees the whole variety of beings as resting in the one, and spreading forth from That (one) alone, he then becomes Brahman.

A scientific investigation is complete only when the intellectually analysed phenomenon is applied physically and brought within the limit of our observation.

When one has understood that the atoms are the physical units of matter one must also realise at once

* Read Talks on Knowledge of the Self—Atmabodh, Stanza No. 10.

that these atoms in different combinations of numbers and patterns create the world of Infinite forms and qualities. Similarly, here to know that the Self is the ultimate Truth behind the names and forms is in itself only a partial knowledge. The complete understanding of the Life can arise only when we at once understand how from the Self the endless multiplicity of names and forms rise up and spread to become the Universe.

Just as in our understanding we can comprehend all the waves as inherent in the ocean, so too a man of right understanding can recognise "*the separate existence of all beings in the One*". Once having understood the ocean we would have also thereby realised how the numberless waves rise from that one ocean; so too a man of right understanding also realises "*the expansion of the plurality from that One alone*". Such moments of complete understanding wherein the Man of Wisdom experiences the one Self within and without—enveloping and embracing, penetrating and nourishing not only the depthless depths of the measureless Infinite, but also the superficial world of pluralistic names and forms—are the sacred moments when he has "*become the Brahman*".

The Self alone can recognise the Self. One who is recognising the one homogeneous Self, one who is experiencing that the Consciousness in him is one with the homogeneous mass of Consciousness everywhere, and the one who also understands how on his coming to the body the world-of-plurality throws a mantle of its dire magic upon the fair face of the Infinite and makes It look ugly with all the perishable names and forms—such a person is of True Wisdom and Right Perception. At that moment he has himself transcended his own equipments and has come to identify the One Consciousness everywhere.

If the One Self be the Self in all the bodies then It must be necessarily acting and earning the reactions—Vasanas. To prove the fallacy of such a conclusion it is said :

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्मायमव्ययः ।

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥ ३२ ॥

32. *anaditvan nirgunatvat
paramatma yam avyayah
sarirastho pi kaunteya
na karoti na lipyate*

अनादित्वात्-Being without beginning, निर्गुणत्वात्-being devoid of qualities, परमात्मा - the Supreme Self, अयम् - this, अव्ययः - imperishable, शरीरस्थाः - dwelling in this body, अपि - though, कौन्तेय - O Kaunteya, न - not, करोति - acts, न - not, लिप्यते - is tainted.

32. Being without beginning, and being devoid of qualities, the Supreme Self, imperishable, though dwelling in the body, O Kaunteya, neither acts nor is tainted.

Even though at its touch it makes the matter equipments thrill into various activities, the actionlessness of the Spirit is insisted upon by the scriptures and it is an idea not so easy for early students of Vedanta to understand. Therefore, the Upanishads have taken great pains to make us understand that the All-full Infinite, being One-without-a-second in its All-pervasiveness has nothing to accomplish for Itself. Earlier we have discussed in the *Geeta* : “it is Nature

that acts” * The Spirit identifying with the “ Field ”, becomes the “ Knower-of-the-Field ” (*Purusha*) and it is this individualised ego that acts and accomplishes

The stanza under discussion gives us logical reasons why the Infinite Consciousness, “ *Though dwelling in the body neither acts nor is It tainted* ”. When the local Judge condemns a murderer to be hanged, Shree Gopal Rao, the Judge, is not considered to have committed a murder; the individuality in the Judge can gain no taint. Shree Gopal Rao in that chair becomes the Sessions Judge, and it is the Judge that has passed the condemnation.

Having no beginning :—That which has a cause alone has a beginning. “ No beginning ”, means, “ no cause ”. Truth being “ that from which everything comes ”, it is the Uncaused Cause for all that has been created. That which has got a *cause* becomes itself an *effect*, and every *effect* is nothing other than its *cause* that has undergone a change. All effects are thus changables, and things that are subject to change must necessarily perish.

Having no quality :—That which has no change cannot have any quality since that which has got qualities is a substance; and all substances are perishable. The Imperishable Infinite, the Cause for everything, Itself caused by nothing, must, therefore, be without any quality.

This Supreme Self, Imperishable :—The Paramatman—which is thus the Uncaused Cause for the entire world of phenomena and quality-less—must necessarily be, by its own logic, Imperishable. The process of change happening in the properties and qualities of a thing is the phenomenon of

* Chapter V, stanza 14.

its decay. That which is Changeless cannot perish And that which has no quality cannot change.

Therefore, the Beginningless, the Qualityless, the Imperishable Supreme Self, though living in the physical structure and thrills the inert matter-fields around each embodied creature into the play of life, in Itself and by Itself It acts not.

This is one of the subtle concepts in Vedanta which lesser intellects must despair to grasp. This is a well-recognised difficult portion in the Vedantic literature.

Here below the Lord is giving some parallel examples to illustrate the actionlessness of the Self and also how the Spirit is taintless in essence, in spite of the discordant and devilish activities of matter around It .—

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ ३३ ॥

33. *yatha sarvagatam sauksmyad
akasam no palipyate
sarvatra vasthito dehe
tatha tma no palipyate*

यथा- As, सर्वगतम् - the all-pervading, सौक्ष्म्यात् - because of its subtlety, आकाशम् - ether, न - not, उपलिप्यते - is tainted, सर्वत्र - everywhere, अवस्थितः - seated, देहे - in the body, तथा - so, अत्मा - the self, न - not, उपलिप्यते - is tainted.

33. As the all-pervading ether is not tainted, because of its subtlety, so the Self seated everywhere in the body is not tainted.

As the all-pervading Akasa (Space) is never soiled:— Space is the example in the phenomena that we can take up to indicate the relationship of the Spirit with Matter. *Akasa* means “that which gives accommodation to things”. In short, it is the concept of pure space. It is the subtlest of the gross-elements, and since, a greater subtlety implies a greater pervasiveness, space pervades everything that is grosser than it. A subtler thing cannot be conditioned by the grosser—“the stone-walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage” for the thoughts of the captive—thoughts being subtler than the stone-walls and iron-bars—can penetrate them.

Space being the subtle it allows everything to remain in it, and yet, nothing that it contains can contaminate it. The Supreme Self which is the very cause of the *Akasa* itself, and, therefore, subtler than the *Akasa*, “*It pervades all; nothing pervades It*”. It cannot be contaminated by anything that is existing or happening in the world of plurality.

Murders of the dream cannot soil the hands of the waker. The bloody garb of the ghost cannot leave its marks on the post. The mirage waters cannot wet even a grain of sand in the desert. These are examples of hallucinations or delusory super-impositions. The world of plurality being nothing but misapprehensions of the Reality, arising out of the non-apprehension of the Real, the realm of matter (*Prakriti*) and its activities cannot contaminate and soil the Perfect and the Eternal.

The Self though seated in the body everywhere is not soiled, just as space cannot be dirtied by all the amount of filth that it may accommodate in itself.

Then what exactly is the Spirit's function in the body?
Listen :

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रीतथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ ३४ ॥

34. *yatha prakasayaty ekah
ki tsnam lokam imam ravih
ksetiram ksetri tatha krtisnam
prakasayati bharata*

यथा - As, प्रकाशयति - illumines, एकं - one, कृत्स्नम् - the whole, लोकम् - world, इमम् - this, रविः - sun, क्षेत्रम् - the field, क्षेत्री - the Lord of the field (Paramatma), तथा - so, कृत्स्नम् - the whole, प्रकाशयति - illumines, भारत - O Bharata.

34. Just as the one sun illumines the whole world, so also the Lord of the Field (Paramatma) illumines the whole Field, O Bharata.

Here is one of the most striking examples in our scriptural literature, given to us by the Divine Charioteer which conveys to our intellectual comprehension the exact relationship of the Consciousness, the Eternal Principle of Life, with reference to the various whirls of matter and their expressions. Just as the one sun illumines the entire universe from afar, at all times, so too the Consciousness merely illumines the world-of-objects, the body, the mind and the intellect.

Though we, generally in our everyday talks attribute the activity of lighting up the world for the sun, in fact, when closely examined we shall find that we cannot attribute any such activity to the sun. An action is that which has a beginning and an end and it is generally undertaken to fulfil

a deep desire or a silent purpose. The sun is not illumining the world in this sense of the term. On the other hand light itself is the nature of the sun, and in his presence everything gets illumined. Similarly, here, Consciousness is of the nature of awareness and in Its presence everything becomes known—illumined.

In the world there is only one sun and it illumines everything, good and bad, vice and virtue, the ugly and the beautiful. And yet, the sun is not sullied by the ugly, the evils and the bad, nor is it blessed by the good, the virtuous or the beautiful. So too, in our inner life the Ever-perfect and Joyous Consciousness functions through the equipments and illumines them, but It never gets contaminated by the sins of the mind, by the perversions of the intellect, nor by the crimes of the physical body. It only illumines. This illumination of the Self playing upon our thoughts and emotions, gets splashed to form the everchanging pattern of the multiple individuals, with their everchanging behaviours.

This doctrine of the Field and the Knower-of-the-Field both playing upon the Supreme, discussed in this chapter, is now concluded in the following stanza :—

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ ३५ ॥

35. *ksetraksetarjnayor evam
antaram jnanacaksusa
bhutaprakrtimoksam ca
ye vidur yanti te param*

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः-Between the Field and the knower of the Field, एवम् - thus, अन्तरम् - distinction, ज्ञान-चक्षुषा - by the eye of knowledge, भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षम् - the liberation from the Prakriti of being, च - and ये - who, विदुः - know, यान्ति - go, ते - they, परम् - the Supreme.

35. They who by the eye of knowledge perceive the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajna and also the liberation from the Prakriti of being they go to the Supreme.

After explaining that the Spirit is the illuminator, and that, being the illuminator, It cannot be tainted by the qualities of the illumined, here Lord Krishna directly advocates that man's life is fulfilled only when he, in his subtle discrimination, successfully meditates upon and realise the constitution, behaviour and relationship between the "Field", "the Knower-of-the-Field", and the "Supreme Self" in himself. This can be done only with a well-integrated instrument, a combination of a fully developed head-and-heart, which alone can apprehend the Invisible, Imperishable One. The faculty that comes to experience this Divine Infinity is often termed as intuition, and in the language of the *Hindu Sastras*, it is called the "Eye of Wisdom".

They who realise and perceive the nature and the essential distinction between the "Field", the "Knower-of-the-Field" and the "Supreme", and thus come to experience the non-existence of the "Field" (*Prakriti* or *Avidya* or *Avyakta*) and, therefore, the "Knower-of-the-Field" (the individuality, the ego, the *Samsarin*, the limited), theirs is the Knowledge Absolute. The "Field" is the material cause

which has no existence apart from mere imaginations and hallucinations. Non-apprehension of the Reality gives rise to misapprehensions of the same. To realise the non-existence of the very material cause is to live the Infinite Nature of the Supreme Self in ourselves, as ourselves.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन संवादे क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगो
नाम त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Om tatsaditi Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishadsu
brahmavidyayam yogasastre Srikrishnarjuna Samvade
kshetra kshetragna vibhagayogo naama
tryaodaso dyayah*

This is one of the most brilliant chapters in the Geeta which gives us a direct subjective method of meditating upon and realising the Imperishable and the Eternal in ourselves. To wake up from our dream is to end all the sorrows that we might have suffered in the dream-state-of-consciousness. There is no traffic between the frontiers that cleanly mark out the worlds of waking, dreaming and the deep-sleep. In the same fashion, the Knower-of-the-Field suffers sorrows and the imperfections of the "Field", but through analysis when the "Knower-of-the-Field" understands its own real nature apart from the "Field", It rediscovers Its own Divine Nature, and in this awakening, the dream that It saw as the Knower-of-the-Field ends.

The plurality and the sorrows are all the tearful details in the dream-plot. To rediscover the Pure Awareness, and to realise that it is the Self which, dressed up in the "Field", becomes the agitated "Knower-of-the-Field"—

is to know all that is to be known. In the entire Geeta we fail to come across a clear and direct indication of the Reality.

For the details of the word-meanings of the *Sankalpa Vakya*, refer our exhaustive notes given at the conclusions of Chapter I and II.

CHAPTER XIV

THE YOGA OF GUNAS

INTRODUCTION

So far we have been told that the Spirit functioning through matter brings forth the expression of an individual who comes to live his experiences in the world. It is very well known to all students of science that the world-of-matter is uniformly the same everywhere. The minerals and non-minerals, the metals and non-metals, the solids, the liquids and the gases, each true to its own properties is the same everywhere. The spiritual teachers of all times have uniformly declared that the vitalising Principle in matter is the Spirit, and this Spirit is universally the same everywhere. It is All-prevading and eternally-dynamic. In short, we are told to believe that when the one Truth expresses through a world-of-matter, which also homogenously the same, the varieties that constitute the universe arise—obviously this contains an uncompromising paradox in itself.

The above idea, expounded exhaustively in the previous chapter, does not provide us with any explanation for the innumerable varieties that we meet with in the world. There are evident distinctions in nature between the kingdom of plant or of animal and the world of man. Even within each species we observe a variety of specimens; no two of them seem to express the same features, neither physical nor mental. These endless varieties are not explained if we

accept the idea that the one Spirit enveloped in the same matter could produce such a heterogeneous multiplicity.

The explanation for the observed variety in experience in life has been indicated in haste in the earlier chapter*. “The Purusha, seated in matter, experiences the *gunas* born of matter”. This no doubt gives us a truly scientific explanation as to why the same Spirit when expressed through matter manifests Itself differently from expression to expression.

When the same Ganges water is poured into hundred different bottles each one would look different from the other, not because the waters are different but because of the shape and colour of each bottle. These are but qualities of the bottle born of the glass-material of the bottles, and when the same sacred water is looked through the bottle-containers, the properties of the bottles get superimposed upon the contents: the blue water, the yellow water, the fat-water, the lean-water etc. Similarly the One Eternal Principle comes to express in the various matter equipments as different individuals, even though the elements that constitute matter are one and the same everywhere—due to the ‘*gunas born of prakriti*’. The term *guna*, used in the dialectics of the Geeta, indicates not the ‘properties’ of a material but the ‘attitude’ with which the mind functions. The psychological being in everyone of us comes under the influence of three different climatic conditions prevalent in our bosom. These three are called the *Gunas*: the Un-activity (*Sattwa*), Activity (*Rajas*) and Inactivity (*Tamas*).

These three, in different proportions, come to influence the mental life and the intellectual calibre of every indivi-

* Refer Stanza 21-XIII.

dual and it is these influences that provide the distinct flavour in each personality. All the three are always present in every bosom but from man to man the proportion of the three differs slightly, and hence the distinct aroma in the character, conduct and behaviour of each individual.

Geeta being a discourse upon the science of self-perfection it has to be extremely logical in the development of its theme. We have been watching how from chapter to chapter the theme was evolving very systematically. Ideas hinted at in a previous chapter are taken up one by one in the following chapters for a thorough treatment and an exhaustive investigation. Regulated dozes of fresh ideas are supplied at the right time to facilitate perfect digestion and right assimilation of them by the students' understanding. In the context of the theme-development in the Geeta this is the most appropriate occasion when the seeker must know precisely what is the nature and behaviour of these *gunas*. In the exhaustive discussions in this chapter we are introduced to each one of these *gunas*.

The three *gunas* function within each one of us and, therefore, each seeker must know the art of diagnosing them in himself subjectively. Diagnosis is generally accomplished through the observation of the symptoms manifest in the patient. Symptomatic treatment is one of the methods in doctoring. In this chapter certain symptoms are enumerated by the Geetacarya and they indicate the preponderance of one or the other of the *gunas* in a given individual.

Thus, a careful study of the chapter provides us with a secret capacity to detect within ourselves the most powerful tendency that has risen up to rule over our mental life at

any given moment. A seeker, who is thus sensitive to recognise the various influences under which he is forced to function from time to time in the world outside, will be able to guide himself away from all wrong impulses, immoral tendencies, unethical urges and animal passions, and keep himself safely balanced in the righteous living, in self-control and in serene purity.

In short, this chapter is an exhaustive handbook-of-instruction explaining to us the working of the subtle body and providing us with some tips as to how we can re-adjust ourselves when the inner mechanism gets chocked up and starts misfiring. If a man, totally ignorant of the behaviour and nature of the machine under the bonnet, were to drive a car wishing to make a long pilgrimage he may not have a very pleasant journey in case the engine starts mis-behaving. On the other hand, if he be an experienced driver, knowing the nature and behaviour of the engine, then he can immediately stop the car, open up the bonnet, readjust the machine, and make his vehicle as faithful as it was before, and send it again panting fast towards the goal !

Many a seeker ends his brilliant and promising spiritual career because on his way to self-perfection he develops 'engine trouble', and not knowing why his mind behaves in that peculiar fashion, he gets himself victimised by lust or passion, and comes to live the sorrows of his spiritual fall. A knowledge of this chapter assures us of a steady progress on our path, as it introduces us to all the secret methods of the mind on all occasions. This chapter is very important for all seekers.

अथ चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः

श्रीभगवानुवाच

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

यज्ज्ञात्वामुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ १ ॥

Sri Bhagavan Uvaca

1. *param bhuvah pravaksyami
jnananam jnanam uttamam
yaj jnatva munayah sarve
param siddhim ito gatah*

परं - supreme, भूयः - again, प्रवक्ष्यामि - (I) will declare, ज्ञानानां - of all knowledge, ज्ञानं - knowledge, उत्तमम् - the best, यत् - which, ज्ञात्वा - having known, मुनयः - the sages, सर्वे - all, पराम् - supreme, सिद्धिम् - to perfection, इतः - after this life, गताः - gone.

The Lord Said :—

- 1 I will again declare (to you) that Supreme Knowledge, the best of all knowledge, which having known all the sages have attained the Supreme Perfection, after this life.

Even a very intelligent man would need repeated consolation when he is extremely agitated by any dire emotion.

One who identifies with one's outward personality and behaves as a finite mortal, cannot, in one's life of agitations and sorrows, easily comprehend and appreciate that one is, in one's essential nature, the Infinite, the Divine. Spiritual truths are to be often repeated again and again by the teacher until the student's rebellious intellect comes to apprehend them sufficiently. Feeding the little children by their parents in Indian homes is a typical example; the mother will have to coax the child repeatedly until sufficient food reaches its belly. Similarly, spiritual ideas will have to be repeated many a time by the teachers until the logic of them sinks into our understanding and therein crystallise themselves to become our own personal conviction.

Therefore, the chapter here opens with a declaration by the Lord "*Again shall I tell Thee* " Not that the Supreme theme has not yet been declared, but, for the purposes of elucidation and correct appreciation, repetition is found to be unavoidable.

The theme of this chapter is declared here as "*That supreme knowledge which is above all other knowledges*". This should not be taken too literally. The subject matter of the chapter deals with the behaviour of man and the different influences that come to play on his subtle body in life. This cannot be the supreme theme in philosophy. But it is declared here as the highest knowledge, inasmuch as without a correct understanding of this theme, self-detection and timely self-correction of the mental mechanism, it will be impossible for a seeker to walk safely on the path divine.

"*Having known which, all the Munis have attained to the highest perfection*" · A precise knowledge of the *gunas*, it is

claimed here, would make the pilgrimage easier for all seekers. A true and exhaustive knowledge of the path, the possible dangers enroute, the difficulty that might arise—these would make a pilgrim warned, and he can undertake his journey well-equipped to meet all these possible dangers. An understanding of the possible mischiefs of the mind is a healthy warning to a diligent student of spirituality, so that he can easily avoid the usual dangers, and can meet his subjective problems efficiently whenever they dare arise in him.

Mum means not a bearded old man, living in a jungle, eating unusual food etc., but it means in Sanskrit, “A man of reflection and contemplation” (*Manana Seelavan*). Thus an understanding of the *gunas*, their nature and their tyranny, when and how they rise up in revolt against our peaceful progress, are all preliminary informations useful for all men of reflection, who are constantly digesting and assimilating their experiences in life and distilling out of them the nobler wisdom of the true goal of life.”

“*After this life*”: The attainment of Perfection, as in many of the Upanishadic declarations, is promised here “after this life”. Some thinkers take this declaration too literally and say that Perfection cannot be gained in this life while living here. Very efficiently and logically Shri Sankaracharya and others break up this argument and assert again and again that Perfection can be gained, here and now, by any diligent seeker. According to these Acharyas “*After this life*” means “at the end of our ego-centric misconceptions of life.”

Even in our life we find that the bachelor must die to become the married man: the virgin must die before she

becomes a mother. In the above cases the person is not dead but his bachelor-hood and her virginity have ended, so that they may acquire their husbandhood and their motherhood. Thus the individuals remaining the same their status changes. Through right reflection and true understanding, our false values of life can end and in the newly found wisdom a life of better illumination and greater equanimity can be lived. This hatching of the 'perfect', out of its shell-like imperfections around, is achieved in the inward warmth of constant contemplation. The mind of an individual who is applying himself in this diligent life of fervant intellectualism, may come under the destructive influences of any of these *gunas* and thus get upset with its serene equilibrium in contemplation. Avoid it, cent percent success is assured. Thus a knowledge of the three *gunas* and their behaviour, help indirectly every enthusiastic seeker.

“The Lord now proceeds to declare that this knowledge definitely leads to Supreme Perfection” :

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ २ ॥

2. *idam jnanam upasritya
mama sadharmyam agatah
sarge pi no pajayante
pralaye na vyathanti ca*

इदम्-this, ज्ञानम्-knowledge, उपाश्रित्य- having taken refuge in, मम-my, साधर्म्यम्-unity, आगताः- having attained to, सर्गे - at the time of creation, अपि - also, न-not, उपजायन्ते - are born, प्रलये - at

the time of dissolution, न-not, व्यथन्ति-are (they) disturbed, च-and.

- 2 They who, having refuge in this Knowledge, have attained to My Being are neither born at the time of creation, nor are they disturbed at the time of dissolution.

The greatness of the knowledge contained in the chapter is not so much in its philosophical implications as in the result that arises in a seeker who diligently makes use of this knowledge. One, who has realised correctly the deep significances of this chapter, can reach the state of Perfection: “*Attain to My Being*”.

The term used in this stanza has been a bone of contention among the different groups of philosophers. However, according to Sankara, *Sadharma* here means not mere “a similarity of quality” (*Samana Dharmata*) but it is “an identity” (*Svaroopata*) with Truth. The term here under discussion has been rendered into different shades of meaning by various interpreters as “Fellowship with Me”, as “Assimilation with My essence”, or even as “become one in quality with Me”. Perfection is a state of awakening to a different level-of-Consciousness, and when we from our waking-state go to the sleep or the dreaming condition we become one with the dreamer or the sleeper and totally get ourselves freed from the waker personality. So too on realising the Self we end our limited existence of our body, mind and intellect, and become one with the Spiritual Nature.

In the Geeta whenever Krishna uses the first person singular, I, it indicates that State of Spiritual Perfection. The theme of the chapter, as we have already indicated, is a thorough study of the play of the *gunas* that bind us down

to the lower plane of matter identifications and, therefore, to the Ego-sense. When we can once get away from and stop totally the play of the *gunas* on our mental life, we get redeemed from our limited sense of individuality and, instantaneously, come to experience our absolute universal nature.

The sorrows of the dream—though very true to the dreamer while he dreams—can no longer affect him the moment he is awake. The joys and sorrows belonging to one plane-of-consciousness cannot stretch their arms to throttle us in another plane-of-consciousness. A seeker, who has through meditation mastered his mind and has transcended it and therefore reached beyond the ordinary realms of Consciousness, cannot thereafter be a heir to the sense of finitude and material sorrows as in his earlier days of matter identifications. An individual Ego when it rises above its own conditions rediscovers itself to be the Omnipotent Reality, which knows no creation or dissolution.

This is indicated here: "*Neither are they born at the time of Creation*"—Creation is the trick of the mind, and when we are no more expressing through the mind and, therefore, are no more conditioned by it, we cannot have the experience of any creation. When anger conquers my bosom I experience and behave as an angry man; but when anger has receded and my mind is calmed I can no longer continue to behave as a bad tempered man. Thought by thought to project a world of creation and come to feel conditioned by one's own imaginations are the tricks of the mind, and so long as one is drowned in the mind the storms of the bosom must necessarily toss one about. On transcending the mind we realise the Self and its Infinite Nature, and thereafterwards, there is no creation nor shall we feel ourselves to have been born.

“Nor are they troubled at the time of dissolution.”—The sorrows of destruction are the pangs of death. While dreaming one can go through the sorrows of a dream death, and yet, if at that time, one were to wake up one can at that very moment laugh at one’s own sorrows at the delusory death pangs suffered in the dream. Having realised the Absolute Nature in that State of Infinite Existence, one can no longer experience either the sorrows of death or the troubles of finitude.

But in order to conquer the mind a seeker must know very clearly the tricks by which the mind generally hoodwinks him. A knowledge of the strategy of our enemies is an essential pre-requisite to plan out our attacks successfully. The stanza is, therefore, right when it declares that a thorough knowledge of the *gunas* will be helpful to everyone who is trying to master his own mind and reach the freedom from all its moral agitations and ethical imperfections

The following two stanzas explain how the universe is evolved by the union between Spirit and Matter. The Spirit enveloped in Matter is the pluralistic expression of existence in the world. From the inert stone to the greatest Prophet of wisdom every existence is but the Spirit expressing through Matter-vestures. In an earlier chapter* we have already seen very clearly how the “Knower-of-the-field” working in the “Field” and identifying with it becomes an individualised Ego, extremely sensitive to the sorrows and tragedies, joys and successes of its environments.

The Lord now proceeds to explain in what way does the marriage between the “Knower-of-the-Field” and the

* Chapter XIII.

“Field” take place and how the union comes to breed our endless sorrows :

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ ३ ॥

3. *mama yonir mahad brahma
tasmin garbham dadhamy aham
sambhavah sarvabhutanam
tato bhavati bhārata*

मम - my, योनिः - womb, महद्ब्रह्म - the great
Brahma, तस्मिन्-in that, गर्भम्-germ, दधामि-place,
अहम्-I, संभवः-the birth, सर्वभूतानाम्-of all beings,
ततः-thence, भवति-is, भारत-O Bharata.

3. My womb is the great Brahman; in that I place
the germ; thence, O Bharata, is the birth of
all beings.

“My womb is the Great Brahman”: The Pure Consciousness, Krishna, is trying to explain the one womb from which the entire universe has risen. On many occasions in our discourses we had stopped to explain how the One Consciousness identifying with various layers of matter has come to manifest Itself as different entities, with different potentialities. A Prime Minister is also a voter—a single voter under the constitution of the country. But a Prime Minister’s powers are a million times more than any average voter can ever hope to have. This omnipotency is gained by his *Office*, because the voter in him has been successful in identifying himself with the hearts of the majority of voters.

The Supreme, identified with the subtle *vasanas* in an individual, becomes an individualised Ego as any one of us. If anyone of us (as a single voter) can renounce his limited tendencies and identify with the total thought-life of the universe (the total aspirations of the *Janata*) the Consciousness that identifies with the 'total-mind' (the individual who identifies with the majority of voters) becomes the *Eswara* (Prime Minister). Here in the stanza, in the language of Vedanta, it is said that the total *vasanas* of the world, meaning the "total Causal-body", is the womb which gets impregnated by the Lord. When life functions on the "total Causal-body", it becomes dynamic and expresses as the "total mind-intellect" (*Hiranya Garbha*).

It has been already explained that the Light of Consciousness *conditioned* by the mind and intellect—reflected in the mental pool of thought—is the sense of Ego, the individuality, manifest in each of us. The total potential Factor from which the world-of-matter emerges out is termed as Nature *Prakriti* in the previous chapter. This *Prakriti* then is called the 'Great Cause' because it embraces the entire universe which is but its effect. Again, from Nature the entire universe has risen and the universe of names and forms is nourished and fattened by the very source which has given birth to it. Therefore, the total nature is termed here, as elsewhere in Vedanta as the Great Brahman (*Mahat*).

"*In that I place the germ*". This total potential nature is the virgin womb, in which, when the shaft of Consciousness penetrates, the light of awareness that comes to play in it, is Its act of impregnation,

Thus vitalised by Life, the inert *Prakriti* becomes dynamised, grows and explodes to express as the spectacular

universe. Hence it is said, “*Thence is the birth of all Beings*”.

Every creative action starts its career in a tendency for it in the artist. This tendency in him when becomes vibrant with a part of the life in the artist, it becomes potential, struggles to express in terms of ideas and feelings, which later on gets expressed in the particular medium of art chosen by the given artist. He may express it through colours, as in painting through songs, as in music: through stones, as in sculpture. or through words, as in literature. But a dead artist can no more express anything even in terms of artistic ideas or thoughts. The total universe of ideas and tendencies (*Vasanas*) when graced by Life becomes vigorous and expresses as the Universe created.

The world of *Vasanas*, of ideas, of thoughts, and of actions, together constituting the total Nature is ever controlled and directed by the *gunas* and, therefore, the three *gunas* are together called in Vedanta as *Maya*, the cause of the universe. The *Maya* expressed in the individual bosom is called Ignorance (*Avidya*). The ignorance is, therefore, the microcosmic expression of *Maya*, and the total ignorance in its macrocosmic form is *Maya*. An individualised *ego* is under the control of *Avidya*, while *Maya* is under the control of *Eswara*. This subtle theme is nowhere so exhaustively explained in the world’s philosophical literature as in the *Mandokya Upanishad* and its *Karika*.*

In short, we are only to remember what we have been already told in the previous chapter, that the “Field” and the “Knower-of-the-Field” are the two aspects of nature (*Prakriti*) and both of them function on the same sub-

* Read Swamiji’s Discourses on Mandokya & Karika.

stratum, the Absolute Eternal Truth, Lord Krishna Himself. The Supreme functioning in the “Field” becomes the Enjoyer-of-the-Field and, therefore, the “Knower-of-the-Field”, detaching from the Field, comes to rediscover himself to be the Pure Absolute Consciousness.

Continuing to elaborate this subtle relationship between Matter and Spirit, and explaining how the Absolute is the uncontaminated but ever vitalising principle in both the “Field” and the “Knower-of-the-Field”

Krishna Said :—

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।

तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ ४ ॥

4. sarvayonisu kaunteya
murtayah sambhavanti yah
tasam brahma mahad yonir
aham bijapradah pita

सर्वयोनिषु—in all the wombs, कौन्तेय—O Kaunteya, मूर्तयः—form, संभवन्ति—are produced, याः—which, तासाम्—their, ब्रह्म—Brahma, महत्—great, योनिः—womb, अहम्—I, बीजप्रदः—seed-giving, पिता—father.

4. Whatever forms are produced, O Kaunteya, in any womb whatsoever, the Great Brahman is their womb, I the seed-giving Father.

“In all wombs” : In the living world, infinite varieties of beings are born and continue to live, and they are replaced at every moment by millions of new births. If thus the whole universe is looked at in one gaze, we find therein,

seething activities of new births. Everywhere the birth of an organism is nothing but an expression of Spirit through a given matter-envelopment. Thus viewed, every matter particle is the womb, which, dynamised by the Light of Consciousness, becomes a potential living being. Every expression of life is matter capturing within its bosom a tiny sparkle of the Spirit.

Lord Krishna, as the Supreme Consciousness Absolute and Infinite, declares here figuratively that “*I am the Father of the Universe*” who places the sperm of life in the womb of Nature (*Prakriti*). A “Field” in itself has no existence without the “Knower-of-the-Field” vitalising it. A steam-engine minus steam is so much of iron in that particular shape! But when steam passes through it, the engine expresses its motive-force and strength, and its particular capacity, the locomotion. Similarly, the body-mind-intellect is so much of mere minerals unless Consciousness expresses through it. No doubt a bachelor in himself can have no child to claim as his own, however potent he may be. He has to get married and his seed is to be placed in the womb. The Spirit cannot express Itself without the Matter *Prakriti*. These ideas are summarised in this stanza when Lord Krishna says that He is the Eternal Father, who impregnates the entire world of matter and arranges the play of life on the stage of the world.

Geeta happens to be declared and written long before Christ and, therefore, the Bible cannot claim, as some of us have been coaxed to believe, that the great Fatherhood of God is a fact recognised only by the Christian faith. At best we can say that it is an idea borrowed by them from the earlier religion. We the Hindus did not over emphasise this Fatherhood of God, because, even though the idea is quite poetic, philosophically it cannot hold much water.

But later religions finding such ideals more easily digestible seem to have borrowed it and we were liberal enough to overlook it.

Taking up the main theme of the chapter now Lord Krishna explains what are the gunas, and how they bind the Spirit with in matter to create the individualised Ego sense in us: (XIV—4)

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ ५ ॥

5 *sattvam rajas tama iti
gunah prakrtisambhava
nibadhnanti mahabaho
dehe dehinam avyayam*

सत्त्वम्—purity, रजः—passion, तमः—inertia, इति—these, गुणाः—qualities, प्रकृतिसंभवाः—born of Prakriti, निबध्नन्ति—bind, महाबाहो—O mighty-armed, देहे—in the body, देहिनम्—the embodied, अव्ययम्—the indestructible.

5. Purity, passion and inertia—these *Gunas*, qualities, O mighty-armed, born of *Prakrti*, bind fast in the body the embodied, the indestructible.

“*Gunas born of Prakriti*”: It is indeed difficult to find adequate rendering for the word *guna* in English. The tradition of thought in the West has nothing similar to these, as the science of psychology in the West is even today passing through its very early childhood. The *influences* under which the thoughts function (*Gunas*) in each bosom

will be considered only when analytical and experimental psychology have exhausted their observations and study.

The conception of *Sattwa* is rather that of perfect purity and luminosity, the opposite of "Foul darkness" called *Tamas*, and distinctly different from the "Dusty colouredness" of *Rajas*. We find in our literature that these *gunas* are associated with light (*Sattwa*), red colouredness (*Rajas*) and darkness (*Tamas*).

The term *guna* also means a 'rope', by which the spiritual beauty of life in us is tied down to the inert and insentient matter vestures. In short, *gunas* are the three different influences under which every human mind comes to play in such an endless variety at different moments of its changing environments.

These *gunas* are born out of matter. Produced by Nature, the "Field", they generate a feeling of attachment, and come to delude successfully the indwelling Self and chain It *as it were*, to the cycle of birth and death in a constant stream of change and pain. *Gunas* have no separate existence as an attribute inherent in a substance. All that we can say is that, they are as many different mental climates in which the minds behave so differently from each other, according to their given moods, governed by the predominating *guna* at any moment of observation.

These *gunas* like chords, *as it were*, bind the Spirit to matter, and create in the Infinite Spirit the painful sense of limitations and sorrows. The Infinite and the All-pervading Spirit can never be contaminated by the dreamy projections of a delusory world of matter. The ghost that emerges out of a post cannot leave its marks on the post. Even after murdering a dozen people in my dream if I wake up

suddenly my hands that were dripping with the blood cannot *now* show any marks on them While dreaming no doubt, the “dreamy world” of my own imaginations was real to the dreamer in me But on waking, the waker in me cannot have any marks left over on him from the dream. Similarly, the Eternal Life functioning in matter gets *as it were* bound to the limitations and finitude of matter, and this delusory experience is continued so long as the *gunas* bind It down to matter.

Now it becomes evidently clear how a clear understanding of what all constitute the *gunas* and how they come to bind us to matter will provide us surely with a charter of freedom, a scheme of getting ourselves freed from the tentacles of our own mental imaginations.

The embodied-self, though indestructable and Infinite, in Its identifications and attachments with the body comes to feel the changes in the body as Its own changes. This delusion is maintained in each one of us by the play of the three *gunas* in us. In the following stanzas we have a clear enumeration of the behaviour of the mind when it comes under the influence of these *gunas* separately.

Of these three gunas, Sattwa is thus defined :

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ ६ ॥

6. *tatra sattvam nirmalatvat
prakasakam anamayam
sukhasangena badhnati
jnanasangena ca nagha*

तत्र—of these, सत्त्वस्—purity, निर्मलत्वात्—from its
 stainlessness, प्रकाशकस्—luminous, अनामयस्—healthy,
 सुखसङ्गेन—by attachment to happiness, बद्धाति—binds,
 ज्ञानसङ्गेन—by attachment to knowledge, च—and,
 अनघ—O sinless one.

6. Of these, *Sattva*, which from its stainlessness, is
 luminous and healthy, binds by attachment to
 happiness and by attachment to knowledge, O
 sinless one.

No thing can be defined as such—this is an accepted
 fact in all sciences. No disease can be defined by itself; nor
 can any emotion be described as such—without explaining
 its symptoms and expressions. So too no *guna* can be
 defined directly. In the following stanzas we find descrip-
 tions of a mind under the influence of each these *gunas* by
 enumerating the type of emotions that reach it, and its
 behaviours. This symptomatic description is, no doubt,
 more helpful to us, the seekers, because, each of us can
 observe and analyse the types of emotions and thoughts
 rising in our mind-intellect equipments and come to deter-
 mine what type of *guna* is governing us at any given time.

Therein, because of its stainlessness Sattwa is luminous—
 When *Sattwa* comes to dominate as the most important
 influence in our thought-life, because of its purity, it is ever
 luminous—It has neither the dull-colouredness of the *Rajas*,
 nor the dark impurities of the *Tamas*. Under the *Sattwa*-
 influence the mind is steady, reflecting the Consciousness,
 the Self, ever faithfully.

*Free from evil—*Evil tendencies must rise in the mind,
 long before such actions actually get perpetrated in the

world outside: as the thought, so the actions. Thus, the evil starts germinating in the mental life. We call that as an evil whereby we try to satisfy the appetites of the flesh, the selfish agitations of the mind, and the Ego-centric desires of our head. Ego-centric self-gratification is the womb from which all evils are born. Such low impulses and confusions can arise only when the mind is under the influence of *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Therefore, it means only here that *Sattwa* is free from all evils, as it is relatively free from the presence of *Rajasic* agitations or *Tamasic* darkness. Though *Sattwa* is thus the most Divine mental attitude, still it binds us and limits our divine spiritual nature.

Sattwa binds by attachment to happiness and knowledge— When the mind is purified from all its agitations (*Rajas*) and the intellect is cleansed of its low passions and criminal lusts (*Tamas*), no doubt, the personality becomes purified, experiencing a greater share of inward peace and happiness and comes to enjoy a greater share of subtle understanding and intellectual comprehension. But even these can create a bondage on the freedom of the Absolute Self. A golden chain, if sufficiently strong, also can bind us equally as any iron chain. Goodness, though it gives us freedom from all vulgarities, it too can shackle us within its own limitations. A perfect one absolutely free is neither bound by goodness nor by evil.

Consciousness, the All-prevading Principle of Awareness, expressed as the Self in each one of us does not directly comprehend any object or idea in the world outside. What we generally understand as intelligence is the Eternal Light of Consciousness reflected at our mind-intellect-equipment. Naturally, therefore, the capacity to intelligently perceive the world differs from person to person

because in no two of us the inner equipments agree. A windowless home remains ever shrowded in darkness. But it can be illumined if a bucket of water is placed on the verandah : the sun light striking on the surface of water can throw a pool of light on the wall of the room through its open door, and that beam of light can drive the darkness away. The Light of Consciousness, eternally the same everywhere, reflecting in the intellect of each one of us throws out a beam of understanding which is the light in which each one of us comprehends his world *

The reflection at a reflecting medium would entirely depend upon the cleanliness and steadiness of the medium. If the mind is clean and the intellect steady, a more efficient intelligence is manifest. Thus whenever a given mind is inspiredly in a creative mood it is actually intelligent, and it is capable of taking the longest flights into the realms of wisdom. At all such occasions of vast knowing and deep understanding the inner equipment is under the influence of *Sattwa*, wherein the agitations created by *Rajas* and the murkiness created by *Tamas*, both are eliminated.

Sattwa also binds the Infinite to matter through its attachment for knowledge and happiness. When once we have experienced the thrilling joys of creative thinking and the inspiring life of goodness and wisdom, we get so attached to them that we will sacrifice thereafter anything around us in order to consistently live that subtle joy. A true scientist, working self-dedicately in his laboratory ; a painter working at his canvas in his poor studio, pale with hunger and weak with disease ; a poet hunted out from society, yet

* This is exhaustively discussed in Talks on Vivekachudamani, by Swamiji

living in public parks, seeking his own joys in his own visions and words: martyrs facing cruel persecutions; politicians suffering long years of exile; mountaineers embracing death...are all examples of how having known the subtler thrills of a higher joy, when the bosom is inspired with *Sattwa*, the individual becomes as much bound in attachment to them, as others are for their own material joys and possessions.

Now the diagnosis of Rajas, when it comes to play its havoc in the human bosom.

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।

तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. *rajo ragatmakam viddhi*
trsnasangasamudbhavam
tan nibadhnati kaunteya
karmasangena dehinam

रजः—Rajas, **रागात्मकम्**—of the nature of passion, **विद्धि**—know, **तृष्णासंगसमुद्भवम्**—the source of thirst and attachment, **तत्**—that, **निबध्नाति**—binds, **कौन्तेय**—O Kaunteya, **कर्मसंगेन**—by attachment to action, **देहिनम्**—the embodied one.

7. Know thou *Rajas* (to be) of the nature of passion, the source of thirst and attachment; it binds fast, O Kaunteya, the embodied one by attachment to action.

A seeker who is striving to conquer his own mind must know all the subtle inclinations of it by which again and again his mental thoughts run amuck only to return and act as sabotur in his own inner bosom.

Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion—When there is an onslaught of *Rajo-guna*-influences in the bosom, man's mind comes to feel choked with a hundred painful passions. Passions are the main symptoms of the working of *Rajo-guna* in the psychological field. Passion expresses itself in a million different urges, desires, emotions and feelings. Yet, all of them can fall under two distinct categories: desires and attachments. Thus in the *Geeta*, Lord Krishna makes these two as the very sources from which all passions arise.

“*Giving rise to thirst and attachment*”—The term used in Sanskrit for ‘desire’ is ‘thirst’. When an individual is thirsty, nothing is for him, for the time being, of as much importance as water which alone can satisfy his thirst. Just as a thirsty man would pant and suffer wanting nothing but water to satiate his pangs, so too, a human personality thirsts for the satisfaction of any desire that has come to burn him down. Once the desire is fulfilled, a sense of attachment comes as a vicious passion to smother down all his peace and joy in his mind. *Desire* is our mental relationship towards objects that has not yet been acquired by us, and *attachment* is the mental slavishness binding us to the objects so acquired.

These two—*desire* for the acquisition of things and the creation of situations which are expected to yield a certain quota of personal happiness, and the sense of clinging *attachment* to things already so acquired—are the volcanos that constantly throw up their molten lava-contents which scorch the smiling fields of life in our bosom. The burning lava that is vomitted by these fiery mountains is the various passions that man comes to express in his sensuous life, made up of his strifes and struggles to acquire, to possess and to guard what has been possessed!

“It binds fast the embodied one by attachment to action” :
 When once an individual has thus come under the influence of *Rajas* he expresses innumerable desires, and blind in his own attachments he lives on in the world manifesting a variety of passions. Such a passionate being—goaded by his desires for things not yet acquired, and crushed under the weight and responsibility of his attachment to things that he possesses—can never keep quiet, but must necessarily act on endlessly earning and spending, saving and procuring, procreating and protecting, and thirsting for more at all moments. Anxious to have more, fearing to loose, he is whipped from action to action. Restlessly rushing, he becomes himself entangled in the joys of his successes, in the pangs of his failures, and thus comes to live as an embodied one, chained with his own actions.

Actions were born because of passions. Passions were rising from the desires and attachments. And all these are the symptoms of the presence of the *Rajo-guna*-influences upon our mind. Thus, if *Sattwa-guna* binds us with its own anxieties for happiness and peace, wisdom and knowledge, as has been said in the previous stanza, here, we understand, that *Rajo-guna* also seemingly binds the Infinite Self to matter vestures and make It, play the part of a limited being, through an endless array of inexhaustible actions. Though the Self is not an agent (Actor), *Rajas* makes Him act with the idea “I am the doer”.

“Tamas also helps to bind the Divine to the mortal flesh” : How?

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८ ॥

8. *tamas tv ajnanajam viddhi
mohanam sarvadehinam
pramadadasyanidrabhis
tan nibadhnati bharata*

तमः—Inertia, तु—but, अज्ञानजम्—born of ignorance, विद्धि—know, मोहनम्—deluding, सर्वदेहिनाम्—to all embodied beings, प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिः—by heedlessness, indolence and sleep, तत्—that, निबध्नाति—binds fast, भारत—O Bharata.

8. But, know thou *Tamas* to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings ; it binds fast, O Bharata by heedlessness, indolence and sleep.

“ *Tamas is born out of ignorance* ”—Under the influence of *Tamas* man's intellectual capacities to discriminate between the right and wrong gets veiled and he starts acting as if under some hallucination or stupification Lord Krishna says that *Tamas* in the human personality binds us to the lower nature in us by providing us with endless misconceptions and miscomprehensions of the true divine purpose of life, which, naturally, forces one in that condition to live in indolence, heedless of the higher purposes. One thereafter comes to live, ever asleep to the nobler and the diviner aspirations of one's life. There is no consistency of purpose, brilliance of thought, softness of emotion, or nobility of action in an individual who comes under the contamination of the *Tamo-guna* influences.

So far the Lord has been systematically giving us the symptoms observable in our mental life when these *guna*

come to pollute our inner tranquillity. Not only that these three gunas* bring about different amounts of divine brilliance in a given individual, but it also binds the Eternal Self, in all its perfections, to feel and act *as though* It is limited and conditioned by the matter envelopments.

Again the action of the Gunas in our inner world are briefly indicated :

सत्त्वं सुखे संजयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे संजयत्युत ॥ ९ ॥

9. *sattvam sukhe sanjayati
rajah karmani bharata
jnanam avrtya tu tamah
pramade sanjayaty uta*

सत्त्वम् - purity, सुखे - to happiness, संजयति - attaches, रजः - active force, कर्मणि - to action, भारत - O Bharata, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, आवृत्य - shrouding, तु - verily, तमः - inertia, प्रमादे - to heedlessness, संजयति - attaches, उत - but.

9. *Sattva* attaches to happiness, *Rajas* to action, O Bharata, while *Tamas* verily, shrouding knowledge, attaches to heedlessness.

These are ideas that have already been described in the previous three stanzas. But Geeta is given out as a

* Gunas in Sanskrit also means "ropes".

conversation between two individuals: a Divine Man of Wisdom, anxious to help the other, an ordinary man of average intelligence, now thoroughly agitated because of his own problems. Naturally, the subtle ideas explained in the crisp stanzas earlier need some repetition, and thus we find here in the stanza Krishna brings out the ideas that have already been indicated and explained in the immediate three stanzas above. Ideas culled from them are strung together to form this stanza now under discussion.

“*Sattwa attaches itself to happiness*”: An individual who has experienced the thrills of the creative moments in life—a scientist, an artist, a poet or for that matter any independent thinker—will not ever like to come down to the passionate world of *Rajas* or into the dark sorrows of *Tamas*. In short, *Sattwa* makes us attached to the inward happiness arising from a life fully lived.

“*And Rajas to action*”—If, on the other hand, one is under the influence of *Rajas*, it makes one naturally passionate with hundreds of thirsty desires and deep attachments and in their fulfilment one is made to sweat and toil in the fields of endless activities.

“*Tamas, veiling wisdom, attaches one to heedlessness*”—When *Tamas* comes to play, by its very nature, it veils right judgement in us and in the resultant indiscriminations we get attached to wrong comprehensions. We become then heedless to the calls of the higher in us.

When do the Gunas produce the effects described above? :

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजःसत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥ १० ॥

10. *rajas tamas ca bhibhuya
sattvam bhavati bharata
rajah sattvam tamas cai va
tamah sattvam rajas tatha*

रजः—rajas, तमः—inertia, च—and, अभिभूय—having overpowered, सत्त्वम्—Sattva, भवति—arises, भारत—O Bharata, रजः—Rajas, सत्त्वम्—Sattva, तमः—inertia, च—and, एव—even, तमः—inertia, सत्त्वम्—purity, रजः—active force, तथा—also.

10. Now *Sattva* arises (prevails), O Bharata, having overpowered *Rajas* and inertia; now *Rajas* having overpowered *Sattva* and inertia; and now inertia having overpowered *Sattva* and *Rajas*.

At this level of our discussion any intelligent student should come to wonder whether these *gunas* produce their effects simultaneously or act at different times, each by turn? If they act simultaneously do they act in perfect concord or in mutual discord? Naturally, the Lord in His Divine Song anticipates this doubt and answers it in the stanza under discussion. He explains how these *gunas* act at different times—each one of them becoming prominent and powerful for the time being.

“*Sattwa arises...*”—The stanza clearly shows that at any given moment, a human personality if analysed, can be found to work under the influence of one predominating *guna* wherein the other two *gunas* are not totally absent but are only of secondary importance. When we say that one is under the influence of *Sattwa*, it only means that the *Rajas* and *Tamas* in him are at that given moment not

prominent enough to contribute enough of their particular nature.

Thus, when *Sattwa* predominates over *Rajas* and *Tamas*, it produces in that bosom at that time its own nature of happiness and knowledge.

When *Rajas* proportionately more in quantity than *Sattwa* and *Tamas* present it expresses its own nature of passions and desires, attachments and actions.

When *Tamas* predominates over *Sattwa* and *Rajas*, then it produces its own effects of shrouding discrimination and making the personality heedless of its nobler duties.

But how are we to know when a particular guna is predominating in us over the other gunas?

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ ११ ॥

11. *sarvadvareshu dehe smin*
prakasa upajayate
gnanam yada tada vidyad
vivrdham sattvam ity uta

सर्वद्वारेषु—through every gate (senses), देहे—in the body, अस्मिन्—in this, प्रकाशम्—wisdom-light, उपजायते—shines, ज्ञानम्—knowledge, यदा—when, तदा—then, विद्याद्—(it) may be known, विवृद्धम्—(is) predominant, सत्त्वम्—*Sattva*, इति—thus, उत—indeed.

11. When through every gate (sense) in this body, the light of intelligence shines, then it may be known that *Sattva* is predominant.

Here follows a discussion in three stanzas, each giving us a more subjective insight into the symptoms produced by each *guna*, from which we can understand under the influence of which *guna* is the personality working at any given moment.

“*When at every gate of the body the light of intelligence shines*”—The apertures of the physical structure, through which the perceived world-of-objects enters us, are the windows-of-knowledge, the sense-organs. Through these holes, the Light of Awareness, goes out, as it were, to illumine the various objects of the world. The knowledge in me pouring out through the eyes, becomes the power of vision and illumines for me all the forms and colours of the world. The same Eternal Awareness shooting through the ears, though they cannot illumine form, brings within my comprehension the world of sound around me. So too, the Divine Light of Cognition beaming out through the tongue illumines the taste.

Thus, “seven tongues of flames” as it were shoot out from the same Fire of knowledge, the Self in us. Each beam of light as it emerges out of each window on the body, it illumines one aspect of the world outside. It must be the experience of all that while we are perceiving something, and efficiently illumining it, we are really in a state of *Sattwa*, for, at this moment, if there are *Rajas* and *Tamas* in us our perception is hampered.

If the mind is agitated by *Rajas* and the intellect is veiled by *Tamas*, even ordinary efficient perceptions become almost impossible. Thus, the more often and more completely we go beyond *Rajas* and *Tamas*, and thereby make our bosom full of *Sattwa*, then the more grows our

capacity to observe, to analyse, to understand and to become aware of the world outside and judge it rightly.

It was already explained that the mechanism of knowing the world outside is the intellect, and the Consciousness reflected in the intellect is the light-of-intelligence by which we come to illumine the world of ideas, feelings and objects available in our life. The sunlight outside never comes directly to a room to illumine the things in the room. It is always the light of the sun reflected at the walls that illumines a cosy room. Similarly, the Light of Consciousness reflected in the intellect is the beam of light that illumines the world-of-objects. The *gunas* are the influences under which the mind and intellect come to live.

It is very well known that a clean and steady reflecting medium will reflect more efficiently than an unsteady, unclean surface. *Rajas* creates agitations and makes the intellect unsteady: *Tamas* creates veilings and makes the intellect unclean. Naturally, the greater the proportion of *Rajas* and *Tamas* in a bosom, the lesser has that intellect its quota of intelligence. Therefore, it is highly scientific to say that at the moment of knowing and comprehending the world one's inner bosom is surely in its pure *Sattwic* moods.

The characteristic marks that indicate the predominance of Rajas in us are described in the following :

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ १२ ॥

12. *lobhah pravrttir arambhah*
karmanam asamah sprha
rajasy etani jayante
vivrddhe bharatarsabha

लोभः - greed, प्रवृत्तिः - activity, आरम्भः - the undertaking, कर्मणाम् - of actions, अशमः - restlessness स्पृहा - longing, रजसि - in *Rajas*, एतानि - these, जायन्ते - arise, विबुद्धे - having become predominant, भरतर्षभ - O bull of the Bharatas (O best of the Bharatas or O Lord of the Bharatas).

12. Greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, restlessness, longing—these arise when *Rajas* is predominant, O best of the Bharatas.

“*Greed, activity, enterprise, unrest*”: Enumerating the type of thoughts and motives that rise up in a mind in which *Rajas* predominates, Lord Krishna lists the above as the most important. *Greed* is the inexhaustible desire to appropriate the property of another, an appetite which has got a tendency to grow more in volume as we satisfy it. The term *enterprise* is here used to indicate all activities motivated by extreme egoism undertaken with an intention to fulfil and satisfy the ego-centric and, therefore, the selfish desires. Another type of experience that is lived through by an inner *Rajasic* personality is a sense of unrest in which the individual fails to enjoy any quietude. The term *unrest* here is defined by Shri Sankaracharya as “Giving vent to joy, attachment etc.”*

To a large extent these three are interconnected and, each successive one can be seen to have risen from the previous tendency. Greed must make the greedy indeed very active, and when an activity is undertaken motivated by greed it expresses in selfish enterprises, and once a man enters such a field of selfish activities,—in his anxiety for the results, in his mental agitations—he creates a set of

* “Anupashamah Harsha-Raga-Pravrithi”.

unhealthy circumstances around him, and he gets himself dragged towards its centre, where he has to perpetrate more and more bitter cruelties, dark immoralities and bloody crimes, and his inward quietude gets completely shattered. He comes to experience extreme unrest. Naturally, one who is in this condition of mind, sweating and labouring in the outer fields, with a heart poisoned by *Rajas*, one comes under the sway of endless longings—for things not yet accomplished, for objects not yet acquired, for profits not yet gained.

In short, under the contagion of *Rajas*, the psychological being in us gets extremely persecuted by its own restlessness which gets expressed in its endless plans, exhausting actions, sweating desires, painful longings, maddening greed and fatiguing restlessness. Such an individual, when he works in the society, his sorrows do not rest with himself—they spread, like contagion, to many thousands around him.

Similarly when Tamas predominates what exactly are the symptoms? Listen :

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ १३ ॥

13. *aprakaso pravrittis ca
pramado moha eva ca
tamasy etani jayante
vivrdhe kurunandana*

अप्रकाशः—darkness, अप्रवृत्तिः—inertness, च—and, प्रमादः—heedlessness, मोहः—delusion, एव—even, च—and, तमसि—in inertia, एतानि—these, जायन्ते—arise,

विवृद्धे—have become predominant, कुरुनन्दन—O descendant of Kuru.

13. Darkness, inertness, heedlessness and delusion—these arise when *Tamas* is predominant, O descendant of Kuru.

“*Dullness, inertness, heedlessness and delusion*”—When these symptoms are recognised by an individual in himself, according to the Geeta, the seeker can take it that he is suffering from *Tamas*. Dullness (*Aprakasa*) is that condition of an intellect when it is incapable of arriving at any decision, a state when a sort of drowsiness veils the potentialities of one's intelligence and makes it impossible for one to discriminate between the right and the wrong. This condition is everyday experienced by every one of us, as sleep conquers our nature at night.

Inaction (Apravarthi): Idleness—the tendency to escape all responsibilities, the sense of incapacity to undertake any endeavour and the lack of enthusiasm to strive for and achieve anything in the world—is the state of inaction explained herein. When *Tamas* predominates all ambitions are sapped. Energy is dormant ; capacity is gone, and eating and sleeping are the individual's sole occupation in life.

The natural effect on the personality of one who is living such a life is that as an individual one becomes heedless of the higher calls from one's within. Nor can one be in fact a Ravana-like creative criminal. Even to be bad, it needs a good amount of enthusiasm and an endless spirit of activity.

Not only that he becomes incapable of responding to the good or the bad in him, but he slowly sinks into delusions. He miscalculates the world around him, misinter-

pretends his own possibilities and always mistakes in determining his relationship with the world around. When thus an individual fails to understand rightly the world outside, himself and his own right relationship with the world around him, his life becomes an error—his very existence a sad mistake.

After thus indicating how a mind and intellect would react under the three distinct influences, of *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, now the Geetacharya wants us to understand that not only are these gunas effective while we live the present embodiment but the tendencies of the mind cultivated and developed, pursued and strengthened while living will determine the life and condition of the individual even after death.

Life after death is a topic that seems to have not so fully thought of in any other school of philosophy as in the exhaustive Science of Life, the Hinduism. All other creeds have their own different explanations but none of them actually believes that there is no life after death. The other creeds have only dogmatic declarations regarding the life after death but they have no logical thought development regarding this topic, which can be crystallised into a complete philosophy.

Earlier in the Geeta we had exhaustively dealt with this topic of re-incarnation. There we had indicated that death is the total divorce of the subtle-body from its physical structure. Therefore, death is the destiny of the body in me and not a tragedy of my ever existing personality. I, as my subtle-body, move out of the present physical structure when I have exhausted my purpose with the present body. The subtle-body is constituted of my mind-and-intellect which is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. Even while I am

living in this body my thoughts determine my movements, both physical and subtle. Therefore, the Hindu Philosophers are logical when they indicate that after death one would be still pursuing the resultant of one's thoughts, which one had cultivated in life while acting with the body.

When I am transferred from my present station of office to another area, I can call at my Banks and expect to get from them not the total amount of money I had deposited in the past, but only the "balance" amount that stands credited to me. So too, the resultant of the positive and negative thoughts entertained, actions done, motives and intentions encouraged, should determine the type and texture of the thoughts in us at the moment of our leaving the physical structure.

The quality of thoughts at any given moment is influenced by the type of *guna* that has come to play in our inner make-up is a truth that has been already known. Therefore, it is logical that the predominant *guna* cultivated by each one of us through the life of activities and thoughts should determine the direction and the range of the disembodied in its flight to the beyond after its release from the body. These possibilities are explained in this section of the Geeta.

Whatever life is obtained after death is caused by the quality and quantity of desires and attachment. And the nature and number of desires and attachments are determined by the Gunas. This is taught here :

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलभं याति देहभृत् ।

तदुत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥ १४ ॥

14. *yada sattve pravrdhe tu
pralayam yati dehabhrt
tado ttamavidam lokan
amalan Pratipadyate*

यदा-when, सत्त्वे-in Sattva, प्रवृद्धे-having become predominant, तु-verily, प्रलयम्-death, याति-meets, देहभृत्-the embodied one, तदा-then, उत्तम-विदाम्-of the knowers of the Highest, लोकान्-to the worlds, अमलान्-of the spotless, प्रतिपद्यते- (he) attains.

14. If the embodied one meets death when *Sattva* is predominant, then he attains to the spotless worlds of the knowers of the Highest.

“*If the embodied one meets death when Sattwa is predominant*”—In the scheme of the thought development in Geeta, Krishna now gives us an idea as to the direction in which the mental equipment of a dead one would move soon after death. This can be to a large extent scientifically determined by a close and intelligent observation of the mental behaviour even during life. A doctor cannot, all of a sudden, one fine morning, start thinking and solving a subtle architectural problem; nor can an engineer overnight feel inspired to write out a prescription for cancer! The doctor has trained his mind for thinking on medicines and disease, and the Engineer has trained himself to solve the problems of constructive destruction or destructive construction! At any given moment the mind of a doctor will be thinking of medicines alone, in conformity with his education and faithful to the type of thoughts his mind is trained to entertain.

Thus, there is a continuity of thought-life in this embodiment: this year's thoughts have a continuity with our last year's thoughts: this month's thoughts are determined by the last month's thoughts; this week is an extension of last week's thoughts; today's thoughts are continued tomorrow. And every moment is an extension of the previous moment's thoughts. If thus there is a continuous development and growth observable, in the thought-life, in its unbroken continuity connecting the past, the present and the future into one unbroken flow, then there is no reason why at the time of death this continuity should suddenly end. Death is only another experience: it will certainly colour the thoughts that follow it—but then, all experiences have been colouring all our past thoughts, and our future thoughts are being coloured by our present experiences. Therefore, the type of thoughts entertained during our life time should determine the type of thoughts we shall be entertaining soon after our departure from this physical structure.

If the embodied one leaves the present physical structure—and, therefore, his present environments and relationships—he should continue his thought-life. The direction in which it would make its flight is determined by the type of training it had acquired during its sojourn in its embodied state here.

If *Sattwa* predominates then “*He attains to spotless regions of the knowers of the Highest*”—It is a concept in our Scriptures (*Agamas*) that the Highest realm of abundant joy, unaffected by any excessive *Rajas* or *Tamas*, is the Realm of the Creator, the *Brahmaloka*: supremely happy and extremely creative.

While in Rajas if one departs?

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ;
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ १५ ॥

15. *rajasi pralayam gatva
karmasangisu jayate
tatha pralinas tamasi
mudahyonisu jayate*

रजसि- In *Rajas*, प्रलयम् - death, गत्वा- meets
कर्मसङ्गिषु - among those attached to action, जायते-
(he) is born, तथा- so, प्रलीनः- dying, तमसि-in iner-
tia, मूढयोनिषु- in the wombs of the senseless, जायते-
(he) is born.

15. Meeting death in *Rajas*, he is born among those
attached to action ; and dying in *Tamas*, he is
born in the womb of the senseless.

“Dead in *Rajas*, he is born among men attached to
action”—When the mind is under the influence of *Rajas*,
and at that time if it leaves a body, according to its tenden-
cies and desires and to fulfil them it takes an embodiment
among those who are attached to extreme action. It only
means that the mind will seek, and it shall successfully dis-
cover, a field where it can completely exhaust its existing
tendencies.

On the other hand if one dies when one's mind is
drowned in extreme *Tamas*, one reaches the lower realm
of irrational beings such as the animal or the vegetable
kingdoms.

It is a consoling philosophy, no doubt, to believe that
once having become men, never shall we ever go into the

lower strata of evolution. But it must be against the truth of what we observe around us. We find in fact that even after having given the best set of circumstances and environments, the members of the human community are not all equally ready to make use of them and evolve in their cultural status. A rich man's son having average intelligence and a good start in life is not always ready to make use of those conducive circumstances but invariably he lives a careless unhealthy life and comes to destroy himself later on in life.

Having born as rational beings, how many of us are behaving as though we have discrimination? A few in the society are even looking up to the cattle and declare that they have a nobler life and a happier existence! That is to say, to a minority of bipeds the life of the quadrupeds is of higher evolution! And when such an idea is entertained in the mind of an individual, to him the life of the cattle is no devolution but is only acquisition of something which it is thirsting for. To a tetotalter a drinking booth is nothing but a den of sorrow and death; but to the drunkard the same is his heaven of joy and harbour of peace.

To the *Tamasic* to be born in the animal kingdom is a wonderful chance to exhaust their appetities and to express fully their nature. Thus philosophically viewed without any reservation we have to accept that the *Tamasic* mentality must find a complete fulfilment in animal embodiment. So they are born there to fulfil their own elected purpose.

Here follows a summary of what has been taught in the preceding verses :

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. *karmanah sukrtasya huh
sattvikam nirmalam phalam
rajasas tu phalam dhukham
ajnanam tamasah phalam*

कर्मणः – of action, सुकृतस्य- (of) good, आहुः-(they) say, सात्त्विकम्- Sattvic, निर्मलम्- pure, फलम्-the fruit, रजसः –of *Rajas*, तु- verily, फलम् – the fruit, दुःखम् – pain, अज्ञानम्- ignorance, तमसः –of inertia, फलम्- the fruit.

16. The fruit of good action, they say, is *Sattvic* and pure; verily the fruit of *Rajas* is pain, and ignorance is the fruit of *Tamas*.

In this stanza Krishna, the great conversationalist, is summarizing again what he had already mentioned in the previous stanzas. Herein he is in brief indicating the results gained when a psychological being comes to live the various three *gunas* severally.

The fruit of good actions they say is Sattvic and pure— If we carefully analyse, we shall find that the thought is the father of all actions. Thoughts are the seeds sown and the actions are the harvest gathered. Seeds of weeds cannot but produce weeds; bad thoughts can bring out only bad actions. And the negative actions in the outside world fatten the wrong tendencies of the mind, and thus multiply the inward agitations.

It is but, therefore, true in the logic of our philosophy—and extremely true in the logic of our worldly experiences—that if one were to live a quiet, contented, and cheerful life

of service and devotion, of love and kindness, of mercy and compassion, and live thus a "good life", certainly such a life indicates the *Sattwic* nature of his mind. And such an individual living such a noble life must necessarily grow in his inward purity.

It may be asked how one can start becoming good when one is already so bad at present. If actions are the expressions of thoughts, and if the existing mental nature is negative, how can we expect such an individual to bring about a change in the climatic conditions within his bosom? All religions the world over answer this question in their injunction and insistence that seekers of truth, devotees of the Lord, votaries of culture—all must strive to live ethically a pure, morally a noble life.

No doubt, to discipline the mind and change the quality of thoughts is no easy job. But to change the type of actions and to discipline our external movements is much more easier. Therefore, to practise goodness, to discipline our behaviour, to act the good-samaritan are all the beginning of this great scheme of self-revival. When these noble actions are undertaken, even if it be as a false show, soon it becomes a habit, and this external habit of discipline tends to discipline the mind.

Hence the insistence in all cultures that from childhood elders must be respected, authority should be obeyed, lie must not be uttered, scriptures are to be read, education must be undertaken, cleanliness must be practised etc. At the moment when these are insisted upon the child, perhaps, it takes them all as varieties of tyranny under which it is compelled to live. But, however, in the long run these rules bring about unconsciously a discipline in the mind of the children.

A thrilled joy of mental serenity, a state of minimum agitation, a capacity to direct this mental strength of such a dynamic mind towards any single-pointed self application—these are all indicated as the fruits of all good action, when the Lord declares that the mind will grow in *Sattwa-guna* and purity. Passions and agitations are the impurities in the mind: bad actions increase them; good actions, by their very nature, quieten the mind and sap out its passions.

The fruit of Rajas is pain--This phrase in the stanza only supports our commentary on the previous. It was already said that *Rajas* is of the nature of passion giving rise to unsatiable desires and extreme attachment, and in our attempts at fulfilling them, we get drowned in a multiplicity of actions*. Thus one, with a mind under the influence of *Rajas*, comes to entertain desires and in order to pacify the stormy conditions one is forced to act in the world outside striving to acquire, to possess, to keep, to spend, to enjoy, to save and to preserve what has been saved. Slowly the individual is dragged into an entombing morass of suffocating death, in a stinking pit of pain and agony. "Verily the fruit of *Rajas* is pain".

Ignorance is the fruit of Tamas—That dullness in action, heedlessness and illusion are the symptoms of *Tamas* in our subtle-body, was already indicated†. Here it is said that the *Tamas* veils our discriminating capacity and foils our attempts at understanding and rightly judging the world of things and beings, and the world of happenings around us.

In us *Rajas* breeds agitations of our mind. And *Sattwa*

* Stanza 7

† Stanza 13.

is that condition within us when the mind has least thought agitations and the intellect is clear and bright in its rational and discriminative powers. In short, *Sattva* is the “condition of dynamic quietude”, which are the creative moments in man’s inward nature.

And what arises from the gunas?

सत्त्वात्संजायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥ १७ ॥

17. *sattvat samjayate jnanam*
rajaso lobha eva ca
pramadamohau tamaso
bhavato jnanam eva ca

सत्त्वात्- From purity, संजायते- arises, ज्ञानम्- knowledge, रजसः -from activity, लोभः - greed, एव- even, च- and, प्रमादमोहौ- heedlessness and delusion, तमसः - from inertia, भवतः - arise, अज्ञानम् - ignorance, एव- even, च- and.

17. From *Sattva* arises knowledge, and greed from *Rajas*; heedlessness and delusion arise from *Tamas*, and also ignorance.

The functions of the *gunas* while they appear on the stage of the mind-intellect are explained here: *From Sattva arises wisdom*—It was already explained how the Pure Consciousness, of Its own accord, illumines nothing or understands nothing. In the Pure Self there is nothing for It to understand, It being an Undivided and Indivisible One Eternal Truth. The Consciousness reflected in the

subtle-body is the 'intelligence' by which we gain our knowledge of the world outside. The knower is the Spirit-conditioned by the mind-intellect. Naturally, when the mind is pure and serene, when there is but the least agitation in it, the light emerging through it is steady and properly focussed. Therefore, the result of a predominant *Sattwa* in us is ultimately the rediscovery of the Self, the experience of *Pure Wisdom*.

And greed from Rajas—When the mind is seething with a constant eruption of desires, it is constantly kept in a state of agitation, and, in its natural anxiety to pacify itself, it has to rush out into the world to procure and fulfill its endless demands and in so doing expresses its greed.

Heedlessness and error arise from Tamas—*Tamas* veils the intellect. The capacity to discriminate between the right and the wrong and the ability to reject the wrong and accept the right is the privilege of man and not the impulse of an animal. The true manhood comes to manifest only when one's intellect is clean and free from all shackles of false prejudices and wrong tendencies. *Tamas* veils the capacity to perceive rightly the world outside, and also it dries up our powers of right judgement.

When anything is not understood properly, none of us can remain in that condition without *misunderstanding* it. This misunderstanding of the world outside compels us to expect impossible perfections to rise up from the very bowels of imperfection. There cannot be even a single cup of clean water, in the entire expanse of the saline waters of the ocean. In a world of change and pain there cannot be a constant joy, or even one instance of permanent happiness.

And yet one who is under the deluding effects of *Tamas*

in himself, miscalculating the world, expects from it experiences which are impossible and in that delusion comes to curse the world for its imperfection*.

Moreover :

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।

जगन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ १८ ॥

18. *urdhvam gacchanti sattvastha
madhye tisthanti rajasah
jaghanyagunavrttistha
adho gacchanti tamasah*

ऊर्ध्वम्- upwards, गच्छन्ति- go, सत्त्वस्थाः - in *Sattva* abiding, मध्ये-in the middle, तिष्ठन्ति- dwell, राजसाः- the *Rajasic*, जगन्यगुणवृत्तिस्थाः - abiding in the function of the lowest guna, अधः - downwards, गच्छन्ति- go, तामसाः - the *Tamasic*.

18. Those who are abiding in *Sattva* go upwards ; the *Rajasic* dwell in the middle ; and the *Tamasic*, abiding in the function of the lowest *guna*, go downwards.

In the ladder of evolution we can conceive of three stages of development. The lowest state of development as seen in the vegetable and in the animal kingdoms, the

* The example of a hungry Jesus going to the Fig-tree to gather figs, at a time when the season of the figs was not yet come, and, in utter disappointment, Jesus asks the tree to wither away...Does it indicate the effect of Tamas even on the Son of God ?

middle stage of evolution with intelligence, healthy and bright as in Man, and a higher state of existence as the disembodied heavenly beings. Here, evolution means "a greater awareness of experiences, a lesser amount of agitations and a sharper power of intelligence. In short, the yard-stick used here to measure evolution is the quantity of joy or happiness, peace or bliss, experienced by the being.

No doubt in this measurement the stone-life is of zero evolution, inasmuch as it has no awareness at all of the world. The plant-life comes next, wherein the Consciousness has dimly started Its career of expression. In the animal-kingdom this Awareness has become more and more clear and vivid. Of the animals man is, no doubt, the greatest being with the fullest Consciousness and the sharpest intellect. But, man has also got his own limitations, and functions only within a limited field of time and place. The ample possibilities reached when once these limitations of man are broken down are indicated as the greatest state of existence enjoyed by a still higher evolution, and they are called the denizens of the Heavens.

Every double-storeyed house must have also its staircase. Invariably after climbing a few steps we will have a platform from which we again turn and climb up the rest of the flights of stairs to reach the rooms on the top-floor. One who is standing on the lower flight of steps is considered of a lower evolution. Those who are standing at the platform are of the middle types, and those who are standing on the top-flights are of the higher evolution. The vegetable and the animal kingdoms stand below. Man stands on the platform and the higher Beings on the upper flights.

Remember, none of them has reached the upstairs to enjoy the comforts of its halls and rooms. Those who

are standing on the platform, have the freedom either to go up or to go down. If this picture has come into our mind we have to a large extent understood the concept of evolution as conceived by the Hindu Philosophy wherein it is always measured, by the degree of consciousness unveiled through matter in a given subject under observation.

The Sattwa-abiding go upwards—Those who are living a pure life of discrimination, clear thinking, right judgement and self-discipline, they come to cultivate more and more the *Sattwa* quality in themselves. When the mind is thus kept in quietude, at once creative and dynamic, it evolves more and more upwards.

The Rajasic dwell in the middle—Those men of *Rajasic* nature, with all their desires and agitations, ambitions and achievements, again and again manifest as men until they acquire the required purity.

The Tamasic go downwards—Those who are revelling in misconceptions, careless of the higher calls in themselves, deluded with their own lust and passions, existing in a state of drowsiness and inertness, they devolve themselves into the lower natures.

In short, the stanza is only summarising the ideas expressed earlier, while Krishna discussed the effects of the *gunas* even in the continuity of existence after death. But where then is the release? That even *Sattwa* binds us with our attachment to knowledge and happiness has been already explained. When can I be then free? All these three, *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, are “*gunas*” meaning “ropes”, that bind us down to the flesh and its sorrow, the world with its imperfections, the mind and its agitations, the intellect and its throbbings. When man is free to enjoy his Godhood,

totally released from all his contacts with the pluralistic world and his attachments to it?

So far we were told at length the nature of the *gunas*, the symptoms from which the most predominating *guna* in us can be diagnosed, their reactions on our life, and how they affect our future etc. We were told that the predominant *guna* in us is the heritage which we gather from our past, and the present is coloured by it and the future again is determined by the play of these *gunas*. All these are but explanations of the causes of bondage—a sense of bondage rooted in illusion, arising from the fact that the Self in us gets identified with the matter vestures around It.

The experience of the finite world, the misery of its jerks, the sorrows of its imperfections, the tragedies of its disappointments—all together constitute the *Samsar* of the Ego, *Purusha* which is nothing other than Infinite Self expressing through Matter (*Prakriti*) and identifying with it. Release can be only when we transcend all the *gunas*.

A patient is suffering from high temperature, excruciating headache and some back pain. All the three are symptoms of his illness. When the fever is down the patient is still suffering. We can say the patient has fully recovered, not when these three symptoms have ended, but only when the patient has also rediscovered his old health and energy. Similarly, the three *gunas* may be in different proportions present in each of us, but the true release comes not only when all the chains have been removed—meaning all the *gunas* are transcended—but only when we are established in the Spiritual Experience.

This process of escaping ourselves from the subjective shackles on our psychological and intellectual nature is

called liberation or *Moksha*. Bound by their own limitations the greater possibilities in us are now idling away in our own bosoms. To redeem them, from their prison-houses of confusions and pains, agitations and sorrows, passions and lust is all that spirituality seeks.

To describe the path of liberation and to explain the Moksha gained from a right judgement of the world outside, the Lord says .

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ १९ ॥

19. *na nyam gunebhyah kartaram
yada drasta nupasyati
gunebhyas ca param vetti
madbhavam so dhigacchati*

न - not, अन्यम् - others, गुणेभ्यः - than the *gunas*,
कर्तारम् - agent, यदा - when, द्रष्टा- the seer, अनुपश्यति
beholds, गुणेभ्यः - than the qualities, च - and, परम् -
higher, वेत्ति know, मद्भावं - my being, सः - he
अधिगच्छति - attains to.

- 19. When the seer beholds no agent other than the
gunas and knows that which is higher than the
gunas, he attains to my Being.

The thought that developed so far has painted indeed a miserable picture of the Spirit inescapably entangled by the three *gunas*. A student of the Geeta would, perhaps at this stage, be feeling despaired at the thought that there is no escape at all for him. One who is standing in a running

train is himself constantly on the move even though he is but standing motionless ! So long as he is travelling on the train the movement of the train is also his movement. But from the moment he alights and stands on the platform onwards the train alone moves, but not he. So too, the Spirit, identifying with and, therefore, riding on the mind-intellect-equipment, dances to the moods of the mind determined by the three *gunas*. To stand apart from the mind, by ending all our identifications with it, is to get complete freedom from the thralldom of our thought-entanglement.

When a seer beholds—This art of disentangling ourselves from our own thought-process within, is the very art of meditation. A meditator who is capable of doing so would come to *behold*, to *experience subjectively*, the state of Pure Knowledge, uncontaminated by the dance of the thoughts. It is called “seeing”, not in the sense one is *seeing* a table or a chair : God cannot be seen ; He is not an “object” of our perception or feeling, or thought. He is the “Subject”, that *perceives* through us, that *feels* in us, that *thinks* with us. But here the word “behold” is used only to indicate that the subjective experience shall be so total, so complete and so convincing that afterwards there shall be no more speculations about such experience. Having seen a thing, no man can ever have any doubt regarding the appearance of the thing he had seen.

No Agent other than the gunas—The experiencer of the Self not only realises himself to be the Infinite but he understands that his Ego, who was previously claiming to be the agent in all his activities, was none other than these *gunas* themselves. *Gunas* govern and direct the entire thought-life at all times in everyone of us and, therefore, *gunas* here means the very *subtle-body*. When we say “a

crowded assembly of intelligence” we mean intelligent-men. Similarly, *gunas* here mean the *mind*.

And knows that which is higher than the gunas—The mind cannot function of its own accord nor can it come to perceive by itself its feelings, it being a by-product of inert matter. The consciousness that functions in and through the mind making it brilliant and dynamic must be a Principle that is other than the mind. If a bucket of water looks like molten-silver it must have borrowed the brilliance from the Sun or the moon for it to reflect. Water in itself has no brilliance. Now, if the reflection dances or breaks up, it must be because of the nature of the water in the bucket, and not because the sun itself is dancing in the sky. The Consciousness reflecting on the mind is the “*agent*”, the individualised Ego (*Jeeva*) in us, who suffers the sense of self-shatterings.

He who has understood that he is not “the reflection at his own mind”, but that which is reflected therein—something other than the mind, and, therefore, something higher than the *gunas*—he is the one who has escaped for ever the shackles of all limitations, the tears of all sorrows and the sighs of all disappointments.

He attains to My being—An individual who has thus transcended his own mind and intellect and has come to positively rediscover himself to be that which was lending to his own mind the capacity to delude himself, that Man of Wisdom *becomes* the Self. Lord Krishna in the Geeta is not to be confused with Sree Krishna, the son of Devaki, or the Divine Flute-player of Brindhavan. He is talking here as the Life in every one of us and each student of the

Geeta must understand that his own Life is talking to the confused Ego within himself.

A *Waker* in himself creates sorrowful situations and comes to fear and weep, loose and gain, mourn and smile in his dream. All his joys and sorrows belong to the “dreamer” in himself. On waking, the dream and the dream-sorrows end, and the “dreamer” *becomes* himself the “waker”. If to the “dreamer” in his sorrows, the waking-consciousness were to manifest and advise, it would have repeated this stanza to the “dreamer”: “When you, the dreamer, behold no agent other than the dreaming-mind and know in yourself that which is higher than the dreaming-mind, you shall attain to My being—the waking-consciousness”.

Similarly here, Krishna, the God-Consciousness manifested, is explaining to man that his ego-centric life and activities, its sorrows and joys, achievements and despairs—all belong to the waker-dreamer-sleeper-personality, and on transcending them all, he shall really *awake* to the Truth, and there *becomes* one with It. A dreamer on waking cannot still remain as a dreamer but must himself become the waker. Similarly, Spirit entangled in matter is man and man disentangled from its matter identifications not only rediscovers but *becomes* the Spirit: “Attains to My being”.

Now the Lord proceeds to teach how one can attain this great goal :

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ २० ॥

20. *gunan etan atitya trin
dehi dehasamudbhavan
janmamrtyujaraduhkhair
vimukto mrtam asnute*

गुणान्- *gunas*, एतान् - these, अतीत्य-*having* cross-
ed, त्रीन् three, देही - the embodied, देहसमुद्भवान् -
out of which the body is evolved, जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैः
from birth, death decay and pain, विमुक्तः - freed,
अमृतम् - Immortality, अश्नुते - attains to.

20. The embodied-one having crossed beyond these
three *gunas* out of which the body is evolved,
is freed from birth, death, decay and pain,
and attains to Immortality.

So long as you stand near the oven in the kitchen you must necessarily feel the heat of the fire and the smoke in the atmosphere. To walk out of the kitchen is to escape both these inconveniences because heat and smoke are the properties of fire in the oven and not the qualities of the atmosphere. In burning summer, out in your courtyard there is both heat and glare to escape which you have only to walk into the shelter of your room. So too, identifying with the *gunas*, and thus playing in the mental and intellectual zones, we suffer the imperfections and sorrows of an ordinary life. But when once these are transcended we shall no more be under the tyranny of these sorrows. Finitude and agitations, mortality and pangs, change and sorrow are not in the Perfect Immortal Changeless Self.

*Having crossed the three Gunas which are the source of the body—*The three *gunas* are the expressions of ignorance, or the nescience, which constitutes the very Causal-body.

We are experiencing the pure causal body in our deep sleep; and this is nothing other than the *gunas*. They emerge out from the Causal body to express themselves first as subtle body, as thoughts and feelings and again as gross body to express themselves in actions.

If the art in me is to be expressed in colours I need the canvas and the brushes; if I am a musician, I need musical instruments and accompaniments to express myself. Each artist takes up the appropriate instruments to express himself. A fiddle in the hands of a painter, and a brush with colours and canvas in the hands of a musician are both useless because they are not the medium for them to express through. If my thoughts are dull and animalistic it would be sorrow for me to bear the physical body of man. Thus, each body—plant, animal or man—is the exact instrument given for the Subtle-body to express through. And the nature and qualities of the Subtle-body are determined by the texture of the Causal-body constituted of the *gunas*.

Therefore it is evident that those who have gone beyond the *gunas* are no more under the tragedies of the Subtle and the Causal bodies.

The embodied one is freed from birth, death, decay and pain—As we said earlier, the heat and smoke are the qualities of the fire in the oven and so long as we are near the oven we suffer from these persecutions. Matter ever changes and these changes have been systematised into definite stages. They are common to all bodies everywhere. These stages in the metamorphosis of matter are birth, growth, decay, disease and death. These five stages are common to all. And each one is a packet of pain: birth is painful, growth is agonizing, decay is disturbing, disease is tyrannical and death is terrible.

But all these sorrows are only the sorrows of matter and not of the Consciousness that illumines them. One who has realised Himself to be the Awareness, he goes beyond all these sorrows. The sun may illumine floods, famine, war, pestillence, funerals, marriages and a million varieties of happenings, and yet, none of them is *in* the sun. Similarly, the Consciousness in us illumines the various changes in our matter envelopments, but they are not of the Spirit. Therefore, one who has realised oneself to be the Spirit, goes beyond all these struggles.

And attains Immortality—Not only that the man of realisation experiences the absence of sorrow but comes to live the positive joy of perfection, is indicated by this phrase. In his deep sleep, a man in his sick bed comes to forget his pain; the disappointed escapes his disappointment; the hungry feels no more his hunger; the sad is no more sorrowful. But thereby the illness is not cured, the disappointment is not removed, the hunger is not satisfied, the sorrow is not mitigated. Sleep is a temporary truce with the existing world of sorrow within. On waking they too return. The state of Bliss experienced at the moment of realisation of the Self is not a mere temporary cessation of the tragedies of matter but it is a re-awakening, a new positive life, a vivid experience, of the Changeless Infinite Nature. And hence it is said here that one comes to experience thereby the State of Immortality, even while living in this very same embodiment.

It is indeed a rare experience to be a God-man upon the earth. What then are the marks of such a liberated soul, so that we may understand him and also recognise this State in ourselves? How will he conduct himself in

society and what exactly would be the relationship of such a master mind living the God-experience with the world outside ?

Arjuna gets an occasion for asking these questions regarding the nature and behaviour of such a God-man.

कैलिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।

किमाचारः कथं चतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

Arjuna Uvaca

21. *kair lingais trin gunan etan
atito bhavati prabho
kimacarah katham cai tams
trin gunan ativartate*

कैः - By what, लिंगैः - by marks, त्रीन्-three
गुणान्-gunas, एतान्-these, अतीतः -crossed, भवति-
becomes, प्रभो-O Lord, किं आचारः -what(is his) con-
duct, कथम् - how च - and, एतान् - these, त्रीन्-three,
गुणान्-gunas, अतिवर्तते goes beyond.

Arjuna Said :—

21. What are the marks of him who has crossed over
the three *gunas*, O Lord ? What is his conduct,
and how does he go beyond these three *gunas* ?

Geeta is written in a conversational style in order to remove the tedium unavoidable in the early studies of any philosophy, and to make it more and more entertaining. In this conversation between the Lord of Perfect Knowledge

and the mortal of extreme delusion, Vyasa the Poet, has evidently not forgotten in his philosophical pre-occupation the human element. In any Hall of Knowledge, no doubt, questions of Arjuna would be considered as expressing some childish inquisitiveness and as the play of some intellectual pranks. The patience with which the Lord answers all the questions of the lesser types of intellect clearly indicates the duties of a true Brahmin in answering exhaustively all the questions raised by the sceptic, nay, even by the non-believers.

Even though we are fed by such a healthy tradition in our literature somehow a cruel spirit of secrecy had come to rob this healthy spirit from our glorious culture. Philosophical ideas putrifies when they are not properly ventilated. Every disciple has got the full freedom to seek first of all to understand properly the logic of the philosophy. Understanding alone can give rise to a true appreciation, and unless we appreciate an idea we will never be able to live it in our day-to-day life. The Hindu Philosophy is a *Way of Life* and, therefore, it has to be essentially lived.

Without exhaustive explanations, the doubts in the bosom cannot be weeded out; without weeding no cultivation is ever possible. Vyasa illustrates this freedom, beyond all traces of doubt, by allowing Arjuna from time to time to ask questions and by making Lord Krishna, with infinite patience and divine love, to come down to the level of the average man's intellect and help him to rise to the top of the Olympus.

Arjuna asks here three definite questions: (1) What are the marks by which a man who has gone beyond the influences of these three *gunas* can be recognised; again

(2) What would be, in that State of Perfection, his relationship with the world outside and his behaviour among us who are still under the persecutions of the three *gunas*; and lastly (3) how does such a Man of Perfection conquer his inner confusions and entanglements and come to attain his spiritual glory.

The Lord proceeds to answer all these questions in the following stanzas. First of all he enumerates the characteristic marks by which we can recognise one who has crossed the three gunas :

श्री भगवानुवाच

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि कांक्षति ॥ २२ ॥

Sri Bhagavan Uvaca

22. *prakasam ca pravrttim ca
moham eva ca pandava
na dvesti sampravrttani
na nivrttani kanksati*

प्रकाशम्-Light, च-and, प्रवृत्तिम्-activity, च-and
मोहम्-delusion, एव-even, च-and, पाण्डव-O Pandava
न-not, द्वेष्टि-hates, संप्रवृत्तानि-(When)gone forth, न-
not, निवृत्तानि-when absent, कांक्षति-longs.

The Blessed Lord Said :

22. Light, activity and delusion, when present, O
Pandava, he hates not nor longs for them when
absent.

The Lord in answering the first question for Arjuna, tries to explain how the man of right understanding does not hate the effects of the three *gunas* when they are clearly present in his inner life; nor does he long after these when they have disappeared. Equanimity is the essence of Perfection and a Man of Knowledge is ever in perfect balance. He craves nothing, nor does he strive to acquire anything new. To have and not to have: both are equal to him, because he is beyond the both, living a life of Inward Peace, which is totally independent of all environments.

“Light and activity and illusion when present, he hates not”—The three terms *light*, *activity* and *illusion* are the effects of their respective causes, the predominance of “*Sattwa*”, of “*Rajas*” and of “*Tamas*”. The three *gunas* are indicated here by their effects. Their presence within him does not create in him either any special attachment or any particular aversion. Whether his mind and intellect are under the influence of *Rajas* or *Tamas*, even when he feels agitated or deluded, he is not in the least affected by them and, therefore, he hates them not. It is only in the absence of that Self-knowledge that one comes to hate them.

A man who has risen above the *gunas* is unaffected when these mental conditions present themselves to his Consciousness. No doubt, a man who is in *Sattwa* develops an attachment to its own essential peace and serenity, its thrills and joys, and he hates when this inward joy is disturbed by agitations (*Rajas*) or by dullness (*Tamas*).

“Nor longs for them when absent”—Not only that he has no particular attachment with them, but he is not at all worried at the absence of them, because, he has risen much above these three *gunas*, and they, together or severally,

have nothing to offer to him which he has not already gained! To a millionaire it is immaterial whether he gets or not, by chance, on the road-side a 25 np. coin. He may stoop down and pick it up, but he would never congratulate himself for it, as much as a poor man under the same circumstance, would.

Thus, he who has crossed over the entanglements of the *gunas*, and has thus transcended fully the equipment of the mind-and-intellect, comes to live the Infinite joys of the Self. To him, the ordinary vehicles of joy and sorrow can no more supply any special quota of experiences. Ever steady and balanced he comes to live beyond all storms and clouds, in a realm of unbroken peace and consistent brilliance. He conquers the world of Pure Awareness—attains the State of Godhood.

Now follows an exhaustive analysis and vivid description of the conduct of one who has risen above the gunas.

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

गुणा वर्तन्ते इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ २३ ॥

23. *udasinavad asino*

gunau yo na vicalyate

guna vartanta ity eva

yo vatisthati ne ngate

उदासीनवत्—Like one unconcerned, आसीनः—seated, गुणैः—by the *gunas*, यः—who, न—not, विचाल्यते—is moved, गुणाः—the *gunas*, वर्तन्ते—operate, इति—thus, एव—even, यः—who, अवतिष्ठति—is self-centred, न—not, इङ्गते—moves.

23. He who, seated like one unconcerned, is moved not by the *gunas*, who knowing that the *gunas* operate, is Self-centred and swerves not.

In this section, constituted of three stanzas, we have an exhaustive picture of the relationship that a Man of Perfection maintains with the things and beings of the world. A man's culture may be a false mask which he has worn on himself. Many of us can act the part of God so long as the situations around us are not too tempting. A man may not be a tyrant, so long as he has no power: he may live a quiet life, so long as he is poor; he may be above corruption, so long as he has no seducing chances. Thus, many of the good qualities which we suspect in many of our friends around, are all a falsely painted superficial beauty, concealing behind its artifice a pale and unhealthy personality.

Potential devils stalk about in the world in the borrowed garbs of artificial enchantments. Therefore, the real test of a Perfect One is not in the jungle, or in a cave, but in the market-place, when he is teased by the mischiefs of the world. Christ was never so great as when he was hanging, nailed to the Cross! The true nature in us will come out only when we are crushed. the fragrance of *chandan* emerges out only when rubbed: *Tulasi* leaves its fragrance on the very fingers that crush them.

It is, therefore, quite scientific and rational that you must know how a man of Perfection will conduct himself in the world. This was already done in hasty strokes in the various chapters, and very exhaustively indeed when Krishna painted the Man of Steady Wisdom.*

* Geeta Chapter II—"Sthita Pragna"

He who, sitting like one unconcerned, is not moved by the gunas—In all his experiences in the world, good, bad or indifferent, he is unconcerned since he knows that it is the play of the mind and intellect. In a cinema hall the tragedies and comedies on the screen need not affect us, since we know that it is a show put up for our entertainment. This does not mean that the seer is really unconcerned with the happenings of the world. Vyasa is very careful in his choice of expression. He only says that the Man of Perfection looks “*as though unconcerned*”. That is to say he is not in the least agitated nor can he be rendered hysterical by anything that is happening around him in life.

Who, knowing that the gunas operate—He understands that the changes in his own inward personality are all nothing but the kaleidoscopic changes of the *gunas* and that the world outside changes according to one's own mental conditions. A man of true Wisdom thus lives ever fully aware of the technique behind the changes in himself and the world around him.

Is Self-centered and swerves not—In order to watch thus the play of the three *gunas* in himself, he should be an observer of them from something beyond the *gunas*. Thus, established in his Pure Spiritual Nature he is able to detachedly observe and enjoy the play of the *gunas* in his own bosom and around in the world. As an observer of a street fight, observing it from his own balcony, is not affected by what he is observing, so too, the Man of Wisdom awakened to the Spiritual Consciousness, when he witnesses the play of the *gunas* in himself he swerves not from his consummate equilibrium; he ever remains in his own Divine Nature established (*Avatishṭati*).

Sankara points out that there is yet another reading in some manuscripts of the Geeta, where instead of "Self-centered" (*Avatishtati*) we have a term meaning "thus thinking he acts" (*Anutishtati*). According to this alternative reading it means that an individual who has mastered himself, free from the shackles of the *gunas* continues to act on in the world outside, ever conscious of the Supreme. All seers have thus worked to educate mankind and to re-establish the enduring values of life in society from time to time. It is the contributions made by such Perfect Masters that has maintained the world culture, and has nourished our very civilisation of which we are so very proud to-day.

This is not the contribution of swords and pen; words and laws, science and economics, revolutions and resolutions, elections and collections, have never so far contributed any permanent factor for the construction of our civilisation. On the other hand a Buddha, a Mahavir, a Vyasa, a Valmiki, a Christ, a Mohammed—all these men have, thought by thought, built up our mutual respect to each other, by preaching to us of love and compassion. But in all such works, the Man of Perfection is above the iron grip of the three *gunas*.

Continuing to elucidate the thought suggested in the previous stanza Lord says :

समुदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥

24. *samaduhkhasukhah svasthah*
samalostasmakancanah
tulyapriyapriyo dhiras
tulyanindatmasamstutih

समदुःखसुखः – Alike in pleasure and pain, **स्वस्थः** standing in his own self **समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः**—regarding a clod of earth, a precious stone and gold alike, **तुल्यप्रियाप्रियः** – the same to the dear and the not dear, **धीरः** – firm, **तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः** – the same in censure and praise.

24. Alike in pleasure and pain, who dwells in the Self, to whom a clod of earth, precious stone and gold are alike, to whom the dear and the not-dear are alike, firm, the same in censure and praise.

The equanimity and balance of personality in a Perfect Man in the midst of the changing vicissitudes of life is brought out in this stanza. One who has gone beyond the tyrannies of the three *gunas* comes to live in a kingdom of his own wherein neither the thrills of *Sattwa* nor the noisy clamours of *Rajas* nor the weariness of *Tamas* have any admission at all. Serenely self-composed he dwells in the Self, far away from the sweat and agitations of the baser appetites, low impulses and selfish passions.

To the average man this State of Equipoise may look like a complete death. And, no doubt, it is so; it is a death to the limited finite life of relative experiences lived by the baser ego. Spirit conditioned by matter comes to behave as though a reed upon the tumultuous surface of an ever agitated mind. Always giddy by the constant storms of love and hatred, likes and dislikes, this unhappy sense-of-individuality suffers its shattering agitations and endless sorrows.

To withdraw, therefore, from this chaotic field of desires and attachments into the shelter of the Self is to relieve the diviner possibilities in ourselves. The dreamer dies to be reborn as the waker; the individuality sense of the ego dies to relieve the Infinite glories of the Self.

Having awakened from the dream what would be the waker's relationship with his last-night's dream-world is the question that Arjuna asks of Krishna! One who has gone beyond the shackles of the three *gunas* is one who has awakened from all misconceptions of the world, fed by one's own I-ness and my-ness. From that state of Godly awakening there cannot be any deep and sincere relationship with the experiences of the lower world whether it be joy or sorrow, things dear or not dear, blame or praise. In all experiences he is a balanced, unattached, witness.

Self-abiding (*Swasthah*)—One who has transcended the *gunas* that rule over the tendencies of the mind becomes the Self, as one who has crossed the frontiers of his dream, discovers himself to be the waker. What would be the *relationship* of one who dwells at the Self with the things around him and what would be his *attitude* to things happening around him, are being answered here. Established as he is in the Supreme Wisdom the world that is contacted from the levels of the body, the mind and the intellect does not touch him. He comes to live a world of his own, for above the plane of matter.

Alike in pleasure and in pain—To come in contact with the outside world through the sense-perceptions, to evaluate them in terms of similar experiences we had in the past, and to come to a judgement of them as pleasure or pain is a tricky function of our individual personality. The worlds of stimulus march themselves into us, and we respond to them,

and these intelligent responses can fall under two categories · Pleasure or Pain That which is pleasurable to one is found to be painful to another If the things of the world are in their own nature either pleasurable or painful they would have certainly given the same uniform reaction to all of us.

It is the nature of the sun to be hot and, therefore, the heat of the Sun is common to all of us. But the things of the world do not react with everyone of us in the same way and, therefore, it is an interpretation of our mind and intellect which are coloured by their own past experiences One who is not looking at the world through these coloured goggles of the mind and intellect should be alike in pleasure and pain.

Regarding a clod of earth, precious stone and gold alike—Possession of things is another appetite seen in the majority of living creatures People would like to possess and hoard precious-stones or gold, and would like to get rid of any clod of mud Some things have got value for us, and for some other things in the world we have no value at all; and they are a positive nuisance But to an awakened Man of Wisdom all these possessions are one and the same, and from his estimation none of them has any real value.

Children collect peacock tails, shells, marbles, broken glass-bangles, old stamps, shapely stones etc. from the roadside or from the waste-paper baskets, and with extreme possessiveness they keep them as their precious possessions But as they grow, without a regret, they throw them away, and the younger ones in the family accept them with gratitude as a precious inheritance from their elder brothers. Similarly, a man living his ego-centric life of desires for

possessions may value gold and precious-stones, but to the Awakened Soul, in his sense of Infinitude, these limited possessions hugged on to by the lesser minds have no charm at all.

The same towards things dear and things not dear: In our relationship with others, where there is an agreeable nature, we come to love it dearly, while wherever there is a disagreeable nature we come to hate it. Love and hatred—dear and not so dear—are all our reactions to agreeable and disagreeable nature of things or situations. These reactions are, no doubt, from the levels of our mind. One who is standing on the shores dressed up in his thick coat will not feel the cold that another must be feeling when, in his nakedness, he is dipping in the river. The cold waters come in contact with the skin of the naked man and he comes to experience the discomforts, while the man on the shores, comfortably warm in his coat, knows no cold.

The average man, plunged in his identification with his own mind and intellect, comes to suffer the world and interprets it as agreeable and disagreeable, and brings down upon himself a lot of confusions and problems. The man of Steady Wisdom is one whose equilibrium is not lost at the onslaught of things and circumstances of the world, whether they be dear or not so dear.

Same in censure and in praise—It is observed that a Man of Perfection is one to whom blame and praise are one, and is unconcerned with either. The experience of a dream cannot contribute either joy or sorrow to one who has “awakened”: he might have been a beggar insulted by the entire society in the dream-world or might have been an adored Rajah ruling over a vast empire in his dream. But

when he wakes up neither the *parise* he received as a Rajah, nor the *censure* he suffered as a beggar can leave upon him any reactions. Awakened from the dream-of-matter when the Man of Wisdom evaluates the blame and praise of the world outside, he finds them both utterly insignificant and almost laughable, and comes to ultimately ignore them.

In the above four beautiful chosen phrases Vyasa has indicated some of the main conditions of life in which the ordinary man comes to eke out his joys and sorrows of life. Pleasure and pain, good and bad possessions, agreeable and disagreeable experiences, joys and sorrows provided by praise and censures are some of the conditions in life by which we get ourselves entangled into a life of agitations and sorrows.

Moreover :

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

25. *manapamanayos tulyas*
tulyo mitraripaksavoh
saivai ambhaparityagi
gunatitah sa ucyate

मानापमानयोः –In honour and dishonour, **तुल्यः** the same, **तुल्यः** – the same **मित्रारिपक्षयोः** –to friends and foes, **सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी** abandoning, **गुणातीतः** crossed beyond the Gunas, **सः** – he, **उच्यते**–is said

- 25 The same in honour and dishonour, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings .. he is said to have crossed beyond the *gunas*.

If the above has drawn a flat picture of the Man of Perfection, herein we have added strokes that shade the outlines and give them a rounded beauty to make them stand out vividly for our closer observation and closer vision.

The same in honour and dishonour—The sense of equanimity in honour and dishonour is described here as one of the definite signs of Perfection attained. Rooted in his own lived experiences of divinity, a man of Vision is not afraid of life and its rewards, because, such a Perfect One comes to look at things and happenings from his own special angle of view. The egoistic evaluation of life tends to respect honour and shun dishonour. Even in ordinary life we have found martyrs courting what others consider as dishonour. They energetically love and serve their generation in spite of the insults and disgrace piled on them by the ignorant generation. Archmedes running along the streets naked from his bath-tub crying “Eureka”, “Eureka”, might have been a dishonour to him on any other day except on that day of his discovery! Honour and dishonour are the evaluations of the intellect that change from time to time and place to place. One who has transcended the ordinary planes of egoism and vanity, to him both are the same; a crown of roses is as welcome as a bejewelled crown! !

The same to friend and foe—He who reads the Path of Wisdom and has risen above the *gunas* to him neither there is any foe in the world nor is he attached with anyone in earthly friendships. My right hand is never a foe to me nor is it merely a friend; it is myself. Another, other than myself, alone can come to claim enmity or friendship with me. When I have realised the oneness of my spiritual

nature, Infinite and All-prevading, as the Spirit I have no relationship in the world outside ; I live my vivid personal experience : “ *They are me* ”.

Abandoning every enterprise—The man of tranquillity, living the God-consciousness has no more any ego in him, nor is he pestered with the endless ego-centric desires which are the sorrows in our life. Desire-motivated activities, undertaken with an anxiety to earn and to acquire, to possess and to hoard, to aggrandise and to claim an ownership over it, is indicated by the term “enterprise”. All these are possible only when there is the ego. When the limited ego-sense has volatalised by the realisation of the Infinite, all ego motivated activities also end. Thereafterwards, he, the God-inspired, works in the world as a God-man. *He is said to have gone beyond the gunas* : The above three stanzas * together paint the complete picture of one who has transcended the *gunas*. These three stanzas answer Arjuna’s second question.

Sankara recognises in these three stanzas “ *a rule of conduct laid down for the Sanyasin who seeks Moksha.*” In short, these qualities are to be practised by every *seeker* who is trying to live the Hindu culture. Once the seeker has gained his inner freedom, these become the characteristic features in his nature. They form the essential signs that indicate one who has risen above all the *gunas*,

The Lord proceeds next to answer the question “ How does one transcend the gunas ? ”

मां च योऽन्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

सगुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयायकल्पते॥ २६ ॥

* Stanzas 23, 24 and 25.

26. *mam ca yo vyabhicarena
bhaktiyogena sevate
sa gunan samatityai tan
brahmabhuyaya kalpate*

माम्—Me, च—and, यः—who, अव्यभिचारेण—unswerving, भक्तियोगेन—with devotion, सेवते—serves, सः—he गुणान्—gunas, समतीत्य—crossing beyond, एतान्—these ब्रह्मभूयाय—for becoming Brahman, कल्पते is fitted.

26. And he who serves Me with an unswerving devotion, he, crossing beyond the *gunas*, is fitted for becoming Brahman.

Being a practical text-book of religion, the Geeta is never satisfied by giving mere philosophical discourses. Every discourse after explaining a definite aspect of our philosophy prescribes immediately a way of training by which the imperfect can aspire to be and ultimately win the Perfection.

“*He who serves Me with an unswerving devotion*”—Love towards God is called “Devotion”. Where there is love there our minds revel readily and with pleasure. Our entire nature is fed by our thoughts and as the thoughts so the mind. To contemplate steadily upon the Infinite Nature of the Self is to ultimately become the Self and thus end our limited, mortal Egoism.

Contemplation over the nature of the Lord in all sincerity and intensity cannot be maintained in us effectively at all times. As we are today, we are not capable of maintaining our mind in a state of meditation all the time. Therefore, Krishna. knowing this weakness of man, advises

a practical method of maintaining this thought in him for a longer period of time through the process of dedicated service (*Sewa*). That all work, if intelligently undertaken in a spirit of dedication and service can be readily converted into a worship has been already explained*. This clearly and evidently explains that the Geeta is not satisfied by a mere devotion to the Lord but the Geetacharya expects his devotees to bring religion from the Pooja-rooms and Temples to the fields of their every-day-life of activities and in all their contacts with others around.

Such a practice of constant God-awareness and dedicated service remove the agitations of the mind and tunes up the inner instrument for a more efficient flight through meditation. *Tamas* and *Rajas* get more and more reduced, and thereby the proportion of *Sattwa* in the seeker's subtle constitution gets increased. And such a seeker "*is fit to become Brahman*". Such an individual who has come to gain a wealth of *Sattwa* in his inward composition would discover in himself a greater ability and a firmer poise of mind during his moments of meditation. The re-awakening to the consciousness of the Self cannot be then very far off.

Here it is said that the Seeker is fitted for *becoming* Brahman. To realise Brahman is to become It; to realise the waker is to become the waker.

How can the sage be himself Brahman? Listen :

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकार्तिकस्य च ॥ २७ ॥

* III Chapter.

27. *brahmano hi pratistha ham
amrtasya vyayasya ca
sasvatasya ca dharmasya
sukhasya kantikasya ca*

ब्रह्मणः- Of Brahman, हि-indeed, प्रतिष्ठा - the abode, अहम्-I, अमृतस्य the immortal, अव्ययस्य- (of) the immutable, च-and, शश्वतस्य- (of) everlasting, च-and, धर्मस्य-of Dharma, सुखस्य-of bliss, एकान्तिकस्य-absolute, च-and.

27. For I am the Abode of Brahman, the Immortal and the Immutable, of everlasting Dharma and of Absolute Bliss.

In describing the Yoga of Devotion and its ultimate goal Geeta has already indicated * : “ *You shall no doubt live in Me thereafter* ” and that the devotee under the inspiration of his own love would come to forget himself as a separate individual, and his mind would get merged with his point-of-contemplation, the Lord. In the previous stanza we are told, “ *He who serves Me with an unswerving Yoga-of-devotion* ” he shall steadily transcend his identifications with his matter-envelopments, by which one comes to create in oneself the false ego-sense. To the extent the ego dies to that extent the experience of the Divine comes to manifest. To retire from the waking is to enter the halls-of-sleep ; and while one is dosing away one is walking farther and farther away from the realm-of-wakefulness and proportionately he is entering into the peaceful abode-of-sleep.

* Chapter XII Stanza 8.

To leave completely one Plane of Consciousness is to enter entirely into another Plane of Consciousness. The *waker* himself totally becomes the *dreamer*, and the *dreamer* knows no waking-state. The *dreamer* ends his dream, when he either wakes up to the world or slides into the joys of peaceful slumber. There is no transaction across the frontiers of these distinct Planes of Consciousness.

In the closing stanza of this chapter, now under discussion, the Lord is indicating the nature of the God-conscious-state where when a Devotee enters he himself becomes the Brahman.

For, I am the Abode of Brahman—The Self that vitalises the Seeker's bosom is the Pure Consciousness, that is the same everywhere, "*Immortal and Immutable, Eternal and Blissfull*". To realise the Self within is to realise the Infinite Self. To taste a pinch of cake is to taste all cakes of all times, and for all times, because, the *knowledge* of the taste of cake is ever the same. In the realm of experience if a meditator has come to apprehend the Self in him, he at once experiences the Omnipresence of the Self. So long as a pot exists, the pot-space is seen distinctly separate from the space around. Once the pot is broken, the pot-space itself becomes the unbounded space in the universe; similarly, when once life's false identifications with body, mind and intellect are broken down—in short, when the Ego is dead, the Awareness of the Infinitude rises up to flood the bosom with *the eternal Dharma and the Unfailing Bliss*.

Shri Sankara in his extremely rational and analytical commentary gives for this stanza three alternative interpretations, each one not contrary to the others, but each one elucidating more and more the philosophical contents in this pregnant verse. Sankara says "*Brahman is Paramatman*,

Immortal and Indestructable ; that abides in Me, who am the Self (Pratyagatman). That being the Self, one recognises by right knowledge the identity of the Self in oneself and the Self everywhere ”.

Sankara gives an alternative meaning to the verse :
“ *It is through the Power (Maya) inherent in Brahman, as Eswara, shows grace to his devotees. I am that Power in manifestation and, therefore, Brahman am I* ”

Again, as an alternative interpretation Sankara suggests a third meaning which, as we said earlier, is not contrary to the former two suggestions, but, in fact, it only paints in greater details the beauties of the stanza and its contents. According to Sankara the words might also be explained as follows : “ *By Brahman is here meant the conditioned-Brahman who alone can be spoken of by any such word as ‘Brahman’..... conditioned-Brahman alone can be conceived of in the finite intellect, perceived by the mind and expressed through language as a contrast with matter.* Here, the term Brahman only means Spirit as opposed in nature to the inert Matter. Thus, Matter and Spirit, both factors conceived by the limited intellect, are limited and so finite objects of knowledge. But both are known by the Consciousness, the Supreme. Therefore “ *I, the Unconditioned and the Unutterable, am the Abode of the conditioned-Brahman, who is Immortal and Indestructable* ”.

The Illuminator is always different from the illuminated. The “subject” is the knower, and the “object” is the known. Krishna, the Infinite, represents the Eternal Subject and, therefore, He is the Abode of all “objects”, including the concept of the Self, which is the Spirit that vitalises and gives a similitude of sentiency and appearance

of activity to all the matter-envelopments. The conditioned-Brahman (*Sow-padhika*) rests upon the Consciousness that is aware of it, which is the Unconditioned (*Nuu-padhika*) Brahman.

In the following Chapter * it will be explained as the three atmans : *Anatman*, *Jeevatman* and *Paramatman*.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन संवादे गुणत्रयविभागयोगो
नाम चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Om tadsaditya Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanisatsu
brahmavidyayam yogasastre Srikrishnarjuna
Samvade Gunatraya-Vibhagayogo
nama Cathurdaso-dhyayaha*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the fourteenth discourse ends entitled :

THE YOGA OF GUNAS

For detailed word-meanings of the Sankalpa Vakya refer earlier chapters †.

* Chapter XV, Stanzas 16, 17 and 18.

† At the closing of Chapters I II.

CHAPTER XV

INTRODUCTION

In this last section, constituted of the closing six Chapters of the Geeta, there is, as all through the Geeta, a systematic development of ideas and a logical building up of the theory that in the Infinite the ever-changing finite world of multiplicity is but a projection, and that the endless experiences of the painful are all caused by our own misapprehensions of the Reality. In the thirteenth Chapter the World-of-matter and the Spirit were beautifully described and brought within our intellectual comprehension. The Field-of-Experience and the Knower-of-the-Field were clearly pictured, and in the chapter it was shown that the Knower-of-the-Field minus the Field-of-Experience is the Pure Awareness, at once Infinite and permanent.

The total impression provided by the various chapters of Geeta up to the thirteenth, was that the World-of-Matter—the entire Cosmos—is one homogenous entity, and that the Spirit is ever Non-dual and Infinite. The assemblage of matter thrilled by the Spirit is the expressions recognised as beings and things in the world. If this be so, any thinking student should wonder how the same Spirit functioning through equipments made up of the same Matter, could express itself in such an endless variety. In order to explain that the distinctions are created because of the differences in the composition, texture, quality and behaviour of the realm of matter in each subject, the fourteenth chapter exhaustively enumerated the three Gunas and their

play. Having thus removed the legitimate doubt of the honest intellect, Krishna, the supreme philosopher, is taking up the next logical topic of discussion in the chapter now under our consideration.

In this chapter the *Geethacharya* discusses the nature of the Spirit in all its implications. From the known alone can the unknown be indicated. The world of the known is the manifested objects of perception, emotion and thought. "No effect can be without a cause", and all effects sustain themselves in their own material cause * Basing his arguments upon this logical fact the Divine Charioteer helps us to lift our mind from the known phenomena to the unknown nomenon.

With reference to the perishable, finite, world of constant change, the Spirit is defined there in the Chapter as the Imperishable, Infinite, Changeless Factor, which is at once the substratum and the nourishment for the imperfect world-of-plurality. The Infinite is thus defined as the imperishable (*Akshara*) with reference to the perishable (*Kshara*) equipments of matter. After thus indicating the antithesis of change as changelessness he will explain how the Experiencer of the changes, being Infinite, is even something other than that which we know as the *change* and the *changeless*. This Unconditioned Eternal Factor, is called by the Geeta as the *Purushotham*.

In the concluding lines Lord Krishna assures Arjuna that he has given out this greatest secret : "*He who without confusions knows Me thus as the Person Supreme, knows all.*"

* Without Cotton (cause,) no cloth (effect) can exist and wherever there is cloth (effect) it is sustained by Cotton (cause) which is its material cause.

and with his whole being devotedly worships Me.” In short, the chapter is one of the rarest pieces of literature available in the world which so directly indicate the Infinite. In fact, for the beauty and brevity of the stanzas in this chapter, no other portion of even Geeta can stand a favourable comparison with it. In India, from the ancient days onwards this chapter had been chosen, to chant before taking food as a prayer, by the Brahmins.

अथ पंचदशोऽध्यायः

श्रीभगवानुवाच

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥१॥

Sri Bhagavan Uvaca

1. *urdhvamulam adhahsakham*

asvattham prahur avyayam

chandamasi yasya parnani

yas tam veda sa vedavit

ऊर्ध्वमूलम्—Rooted above, अधःशाखम्—branches below, अश्वत्थम्—the Peepul tree, प्राहुः—they speak of, अव्ययम्—indestructible, छन्दांसि—Vedas, यस्य—of which, पर्णानि—leaves, यः—who, तम्—that, वेद—knows, सः—he, वेदवित्—(is) Veda-knower.

The Blessed Lord said:—

1. They (wise people) speak of the indestructible Peepul Tree (*Ficus Religiosa*) having its root

above and branches below, whose leaves are the Vedas ; he who knows it is a Veda-knower.

Reminiscent of the casual picture of the “peepul-tree” brought up in the Kathopanishad, * here Vyasa exhaustively paints the Tree-of-Life and shows its relationship with Infinite. If the Spirit be one-without-a-second, out of this one Consciousness how did the world of matter—constituted of the body and its perceptions, the mind and its feelings, the intellect and its thoughts—arise ? Even if they have risen up, what nourishes them and sustains them ? what exactly is the relationship between God, the creator, and, the world, the created—the Infinite and the finite. These are some of the questions that generally rise up in any human intellect when once it is set to contemplate upon life.

The picture of the “peepul-tree” unveiled in these three stanzas serves as a beautiful allegory of the entire spiritual concept expounded in this chapter.

Aswatha is Botanical *Ficus Religiosa*, popularly called as the peepul-tree,† which, according to some, has gathered its name “because horses used to stand under its shade (*Aswa-stha*).” According to Sankara, this tree has been chosen to represent the entire cosmos because of its derivative meaning—*Swa* means “tomorrow” : *Stha* means “that which remains” : therefore, *Aswatha* means “that which will *not* remain the same till tomorrow”. In short, the word indicates the ephemeral, the ever-changing.

It is described here that the *Aswatha-tree* has its roots “up” (*Oordhwa*). Taking the literary meaning we have

* Refer “Discourses on Kathopanishad” by Swamiji vi—1.

† Not the banyan-tree which has got adventitious roots growing down from its branches.

got some spiritually absurd, religiously mischievous, aesthetically ugly pictures of the Tree-of-Samsar, painted by some illiterate artists, and made easily available in the Indian markets. Such pictures can help none except the unsympathetic missionary for his mischievous conversion-programmes.

According to Anandagiri * the *Samsar* is represented as a tree (*Vriksha*) because of the etymological meaning of the Sanskrit term: *Vriksha*: "that which can be cut down". The experience of change and sorrow which the world of plurality gives to us can be totally ended through detachment. The Tree-of-multiplicity that has seemingly sprung forth from the Infinite Consciousness Divine, can be cut down by shifting our attention from the Tree to the Divine.

Luckily for us, who are educated in the modern universities, we have a similar use of the term "tree" in our History text-books. The '*family trees*' of kings, and dynasties are without an exception shown as branching down from its ancestral 'source'. Similarly, the Tree-of-Samsar has its roots *up* in the Divine Consciousness. The Tree holds itself up and gets itself nourished by its roots: the "experiences" of change and the "experiencers" of them are all established in the Infinite and draws their existence and substance from It alone.

"Even then", many of our friends doubt "why, the word '*up*' (*Oordhwa*) is used". It is used here in the same connotation as we use the term '*up*' generally in our every day expressions, like '*High command*': '*Higher officials*': '*top men*': or '*upper class*': '*high-class jewellery*', etc. In all

* One who has written "notes" on Shri Shankara's commentary.

these cases by the terms *high* or *up* no geometrical elevation is expressed, but it indicates a superiority, a greater nobility or value. Psychologically it is natural for man to concede for the subtler and the diviner a high place of reverence and consider the grosser and the devilish as belonging to a lower status. The perfect, is the highest Consciousness, illumined and vitalised by which alone can the body-mind-intellect-equipment can experience its world of "perception-emotion-thought". Naturally, therefore, the world of plurality is alegorically pictured here as the fig-tree—arising from and substained by the higher Consciousness, the Reality.

This world-of-change (*Aswatha*) is considered here as eternal (*Avyaya*) only in a relative sense. Any peepul-tree in any village must have observed many generations playing and growing up under its shade, and thus, with reference to any man's average age the fig-tree can be considered as relatively eternal. Similarly, with reference to the generations that come to grow, conieeve, plan, strive, achieve and die away, the world itself can be considered as relatively immortal.

For this Tree-of-life "*the Vedas themselves are the leaves.*" A lot of explanation has been put fourth by the various *Acharyas* on this statement. For examle, Sankara declares, that Vedas protect (*Chad*) the world, since they explain what is right and what is wrong, just as the leaves protect the tree. There are others like Ramanuja who say that the Tree-of-*Samsara* flourishes by the performance of Vedic rites which lead to heavenly reward; hence the Vedas are its leaves. These explanations might appeal to a generation that had been soaked with a traditional belief in the rituals and their rewards. But in the modern times it may prove as too big a lump for the educated to swallow.

It can be viewed and interpreted in a more appealing style. Veda means 'knowledge'. Knowledge does bring forth a greater spurt of dynamism into the world of life. In comparison with the modern world—its colossal endeavours, mighty achievements, and superhuman aspirations—the ancient generations were, relatively, not at all alive! More the knowledge a generation acquires, clearer becomes its vision of a mightier future and its diviner possibilities, and naturally, greater is the amount of effort put forth by that generation in order to achieve the perceived goal. Now to compare Veda 'knowledge', to the leaves of the 'Tree' is not quite inappropriate. Leaves are areas from which the water contents get evaporated in all trees, and this in its turn creates the osmotic-pressure in the roots and facilitates the roots to draw more quantity of nourishment from the earth. Cut down the leaves of a tree, its growth is immediately stunned; the larger the number of branches and leaves, the greater is the tree's dimension and growth. Where there is a greater knowledge there we are sure to watch a greater manifestation-of-life.

'He who knows it, is a knower of the Veda': One who has realised not only the *Aswatha*-tree but also the Higher from which it derives its existence, he alone is the one who has fulfilled his knowledge of the Vedas. Vedas indicate the One Eternal Principle from which all the realms of experience have sprung up, and neither pure science nor mere devotion achieve the Truth of perfect knowledge, is the conclusion of Geeta. Knowledge is perfect only when we know of the here and the hereafter, of the finite and the Infinite, of the created and the Creator. All the rest of the pursuits of knowledge, however spectacular they might be, they are only, at their best, an entirely one-sided view of the

whole Truth. The man of perfect wisdom as conceived by the Vedas is the knower of both the *perishable* and the *Imperishable*; and such a one alone is recognised by Krishna as the *Vedavit*—knower of the Vedas.

“Now follows another figurative representation of the members of this Tree of Samsara”.

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखाः

गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि

कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥२॥

2. *adhas co rdhvam prasrtas tasya sakha*
gunapavrddha visayapralah
adhas ca mulany anusamtatani
karmanubandhini manusyaloke

अधः—Below, च—and, ऊर्ध्वम्—above, प्रसृता—spread
तस्य—its, शाखाः—branches, गुणप्रवृद्धाः—nourished by
the Gunas, विषयप्रवालाः—sense-objects (are) its buds
अधः—below, च—and, मूलानि—the roots, अनुसंततानि—are
stretched forth, कर्मानुबन्धीनि—originating action,
मनुष्यलोके—in the world of men.

2. Below and above are spread its branches, nourished
by the Gunas; sense-objects are its buds, and
below in the world of men stretch forth the
roots, originating in action.

Continuing to paint the picture of the tree-of-Samsara we have here more details thrown on to it. Such mystical representations should not be taken too literally, whether it

be in literature or in art. The very style of the Vedas is couched in mysticism. To take any convenient object of world and to describe it in such a poetic style as to express some of the subtler philosophical truths and to convey thereby some deeper religious message is called mysticism. Unless a student is familiar with this difficult style it will be hard for him to perceive the art and correctly judge its beauty. And, it becomes all the more painful when such a picture is painted, not by brush and colour, but by mere words.

Describing the Tree-of-life and adding more details to it Vyasa says: “*Upwards and downwards its branches spread*”—the flow of life in the individual, as well as in the world, is sometimes towards the higher evolutionary purposes, but very often tends to cater the lower animal nature. These two tendencies are significantly indicated here when it is described that the branches of the Tree-of-life grow both “upwards and downwards”.

“*Fattened by the Gunas*”: These urges for living the higher and the lower values are maintained and nourished by the particular type of psychological tendencies (*Gunas*) available in the individual. In an earlier chapter* the play of the *Gunas* has been already discussed exhaustively.

In any tree there are nodular buds which are potential branches not yet developed, but waiting for a chance to burst forth. Corresponding to them, Krishna says in the details describing this *Aswatha*-tree that the sense-objects are the ‘buds’. It is a fact that in the presence of the

* Refer Chapter XIV “Guna-Traya-Vibhaga-Yoga”: Geeta Discourses Vol III

‘ object ’ our tendencies revolt against all our higher concepts and ideals and run amuck to gain their gratification.

‘ *Downward the roots extend* ’: If the main root of the tree of the *Samsara* is lost in the Absolute Reality high above, the “secondary roots” which spring from it are spread all around, and grow even downwards, “*in the world of man initiating all actions* :” These secondary roots are thought-channels (*vasanas*) created in each one of us, which propel each towards his own typical actions and reactions in the world. They are the very causes that promote man’s evil and meritorious activities in world. Just as the main tap-root while spreading its secondary branches through them claw the earth and get the plant rooted well, so too these *Samskaras*, actions and their reactions, both good and evil, bind the individuals fast to the earthly plain of likes and dislikes, of profit and loss, of earning and spending.

The following two stanzas indicate how we can annihilate the Tree and thereby come to experience the pure source of all life’s manifestations : the Infinite Life.

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलम्
असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥३॥

3. *na rupam asye ha tathopalabhyate*
na nto na ca dir na ca sampratistha
asvattham enam suvirudhamulam
asangasastrena drdhena chittva

न-Not, रूपम्-form, अस्य-its, इह-here, तथा-as such, उपलभ्यते-is perceived, न-not, अन्तः- (its) end, न-not, च-and, आदिः- (its) origin, न-not, च-and, संप्रतिष्ठा-foundation, अश्वत्थम्-Peepul-tree, एनम्-this सुविरूढमूलम्-firm-rooted, असंगशस्त्रेण-with the axe of non-attachment, दृढेन-strong, छित्वा - having cut asunder.

3. Its form is not here perceived as such, neither its end, nor its origin, nor its foundation or resting-place; having cut asunder this firm-rooted Peepul-tree with the strong axe of non-attachment;

ततः पदं तत्परिमागितव्यम्

यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये

यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥४॥

4. *tatah padam tat parimargitavyam*
yasmin gata na nivartanti bhuyah
tam eva ca dyam purusam prapadye
yatha pravrttih prasrta purani

ततः-Then, पदम्-goal, तत्-that, परिमागितव्यम्-should be sought for, यस्मिन्-whither, गताः-gone, न-not, निवर्तन्ति-return, भूयः-again, तम्-in that, एव even, च-and, आद्यम्-primeval, पुरुषम्-Purusha, प्रपद्ये-I seek refuge, यतः-from which, प्रवृत्तिः-activity, (or energy), प्रसृताः-streamed forth, पुराणि-ancient.

4. Then that Goal should be sought for, to where
having gone none returns again. I seek refuge
in that primeval Purusha from which streamed
forth the ancient Activity (or energy.)

In order that the students may not misunderstand this mystic symbolism, and take the Tree too literally the *Geeta-charya* owns that, ‘ *Its form is not perceived as such here*’. The Tree-of-life as described in the previous stanzas, evidently represents the entire field of the manifested life. The subtle Principle of Life manifests through us in different plains and in a variety of forms; as perceptions of the body; as emotions and feelings of the mind; as ideals and thoughts of the intellect; and as mere non-apprehension* of the causal body. All these vehicles and their experience together constitute the total manifested world projected upon the Infinite Life, and they, in their totality, is the *Aswatha*-tree spreading out into all quarters. Naturally, therefore, Lord Krishna says that very few have the comprehensive vision to see them all as such at one gaze.

Not only that the different vehicles and their expressions are not recognised as such in its entirety, but very few of us in the world come to recognise “ *its end or its beginning or its existence*”. The Tree-of-life springs from the “ *ignorance or reality*” (*Avidya*) and it ends on the “ *realisation of the Self*” (*Vidya*), and it exists only so long as the mental demands and desires (*Vasanas*) function. These subjective implications are not generally perceived or recognised or understood by the majority of living men.

* The complete black-out and absence of any knowledge—ignorance—experienced in deep sleep is meant here.

The manifested world constituting the *Aswatha*-tree can be cleft 'by the strong axe of detachment': The world of matter is inert and insentient. The experience of life gained through it is known and lived only because of the play of Consciousness upon it. So long as the wheels of a car are geared on to the machine the vehicle moves. In case we can clutch off the motive power from the moving wheels, the vehicle must necessarily come to its own natural condition of motionless stillness. Similarly, if the Consciousness is withdrawn from the body-mind-intellect vehicle, its play of perception-emotion-thought must necessarily halt. This clutching off of Consciousness from the inert matter vehicles is *detachment*. With the axe of detachment Krishna advises Arjuna to cut down the Tree of multiple experiences.

At this level of our conscious existence we are apt to protest against this advice, because to us detachment from these three vehicles is a complete retirement from the worlds of perception, from the realms of emotion, and from the fields of thought. In fact, we know no other world to tread and therefore, intellectually we reach a state of utter nihilistic nothingness. This is a despairing situation indeed. But Krishna adds in almost one and the same breath the following stanza and continues: '*Then that goal should be sought for, to which men go and do not return again*'.

On the whole, the tone of suggestion in and the manner of expression of these two stanzas clearly indicate that the students who seek the highest Divine in themselves should learn to withdraw more and more from their usual dissipations through perceptions, feelings and thoughts, and must in that still moment of meditation * contemplate upon the

* Refer "Discourses on Geeta" by Swamiji: Ch V-25. Also understand this technique from "Meditation and Life" by the same author.

Higher—the Source from which the *Aswatha*-tree itself draws its sustenance and nourishment.

Had this advice been merely left at that it would have been at best only a poetic vision or an impossible suggestion. As a practical hand-book of instructions to man on how to live nobly and grow himself out of his own instinctive weakness, Geeta has to show the seekers some practical methods of self-improvement at every stage. And this is accomplished when the stanzas are closed with a prayer : ' *I seek refuge in that Primeavel Purusha whence streamed forth the ancient current* '. The stanza indicates that when our personality has to a maximum degree retired from its extrovert pursuits, the intellect is to be consciously turned, in an attitude of love and surrender, to the goal,—the goal from whence the stream of Consciousness flows to the matter vehicles facilitating them to play their parts. In short, halt the manifestations of life and seek the Eternal Life, the source of all expressions in Life. What this Primeavel Purusha is and how one is to conceive It is the theme of the entire chapter.

“ *What sort of seekers reach the Goal? Listen* ”

निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा

अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।

द्वन्द्वेर्विमुक्ताः सुख दुःखसंज्ञै

गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥५॥

5. *nirmanamoha jitasangadosa*
adhvatmanitya vinivrttakamah
dvandvair vimuktah sukhaduhkhasamjnair
gacchanty amudhah padam avyayam tat

निर्मानमोहाः - Free from pride and delusion,
जितसंगदोषाः - victorious over the evil of attachment,
अध्यात्मनित्याः - dwelling constantly in the
Self, विनिवृत्तकामाः - (their) desires having completely
turned away, द्वन्द्वैः - from the pairs of opposites,
विमुक्ताः - freed, सुखदुःखसंज्ञैः - known as pleasure
and pain, गच्छन्ति-reach, अमूढाः-the undeluded,
पदम्-goal, अव्ययम्-eternal, तत्-that.

5. Free from pride and delusion, victorious over the
evil of attachment, dwelling constantly in the
Self, there desires having completely turned
away, freed from the pairs of opposites—known
as pleasure and pain,—the undeluded reach
that goal Eternal.

Philosophy in India is something for us to live and
practise. Ultimately it considers itself fulfilled only when we
come to experience its promised goal. It is natural, there-
fore, that in our scriptures and text-books we find a wealth
of instructions apart from detailed and elaborate discussions
on the theories of Perfection. The stanza under discussion
is a typical example of the detailed instructions supplied to
guide the adventurous seekers trying to follow the path.
Five conditions are explained herein which are nothing but
certain disciplines, adjustments, and re-education of the
vehicles of life, and Krishna concludes that those who have
accomplished these shall reach the Divine experience and
live a life enjoying a sense of supreme fulfilment.

“Free from pride and delusion :” Both these qualities of
pride and delusion indicate a false exaggerated estimate of

oneself and others. Erroneous estimate of one's own importance is called *pride*, and it brings about an enormous amount of heavy responsibilities upon oneself to maintain it. There is no time thereafter for him to cultivate himself or to seek knowledge or get himself educated. Similarly, error in judgment regarding things and beings, happenings and situations, in the world outside, called *delusion*, makes us live in a false world of our own imagination without actually facing the immediate problems around.

‘*With the evil of attachment conquered*’. To live in the flesh, and seek our life's fulfilment only in the joy derived from our contacts with the sense-objects in the world around us, is to live in the outer bark, cheating ourselves entirely from life's deeper possibilities. Such an ignorant fool gets extremely attached with the objects of the world, and once this attachment has grown, all his attentions in life will be irresistably turned towards these objects. Shackled by them, dancing ever to their rythmn of change and destruction, he comes to lay waste his powers, without ever realising the nobler purpose of the Life Divine.

‘*Ever dwelling in the Self*’: Detachment from the world-of-objects is never possible without attaching ourselves with something nobler and divine. The human mind-intellect-equipment can exist only in the positive contemplating of some objects. It cannot remain in a negative attitude of not contemplating anything. For example, from tomorrow onwards let us determine not to think of a bald headed man as soon as we wake up; it is cent per cent sure then that the very first thing which we will remember will be a bald-head. But supposing now we give the mind a positive point to contemplate upon, as ‘*Narayana-Narayana*’ we shall find that the mind has avoided totally the condemned thought.

In the same way in order that the mind may not have the evil of attachment in it, it should live in a spirit of contemplation upon the Self.

‘ *Their desires completely at rest* ’: Desire is the activity of the intellect. When the intellect desires the mind starts contemplation upon the desired objects: as the desire so the thoughts. Therefore, the discipline of the intellect should be to discourage desiring for the finite joys arising out of the ephemeral sense-objects of the world. When the desires have ended the mind becomes still.

‘ *Released from the pairs-of-opposites like pleasure and pain* ’: When the body comes in contact with a sense-object it is the mind that comes to experience as it were the final result of the contact as pleasure or pain. Once the mind starts recognising this pair, then it is natural for any mind to revolt against ‘ pain ’ and instinctively seek ‘ pleasure.’ Unfortunately in this mad onrush of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, there is no stability inasmuch as things that constituted joys of yesterday prove themselves to be the sources of sorrow to-day. To cater to the whims and fancies of such an unsteady entity is to barter away our chances to bring about any cultural unfoldment in ourselves.

And the stanza concludes by a positive and optimistic declaration, having in force and style the vehemence of a commandment, when it says, ‘ *the undeluded reach that Goal Eternal* ’. The Consciousness expressed through the matter-vehicles in the miserable man, torn with his own stresses and strains; and the same Consciousness gathered from these vehicles and experienced as such is the Divine moment of Infinite realisation.

‘ *The Goal is again clearly specified thus* ’:

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥६॥

6. *na tad bhasayate suryo
na sasanko na pavakah
yad gatva na nivartante
ta dhama paramam mama*

न-Not, तत्-that, भासयते-illuminates, सूर्यः - the sun, न-not, शशाङ्कः-the moon, न-not, पावकः - fire, यत्-to which, गत्वा-having gone, न-not, निवर्तन्ते-(they) return, तत् - that, धाम - Abode, परमम् - supreme, मम-my.

6. Nor does the sun shine there, nor moon, nor fire ;
to which having gone they return not ; that is
My Supreme Abode.

Consecutively in the two previous stanzas it was repeatedly asserted that the goal sought in spiritual life is one, "having gone into which there is no return ever" The very same idea, that the Perfection gained is an irrevocable fact, and that there is no more fear of any return into the natural stupidities of a limited egocentric life, is being emphasised in this stanza also. Repetition is a method of assertion in all scriptural literature. No doubt this method is not used everywhere Wherever logic is available, ideas are nailed in by logical reasonings. But there are realms, into which the teacher alone has at present admission and not we, the student class, and, therefore, the prophetic Rishies have no other go but to repeatedly assert for our acceptance, the nature and condition of the unknown experience of the Infinite.

This glorious State of Perfection is the Goal which almost all stanzas in Geeta consistently indicate, and though it is an Absolute State, here an honest attempt is being made to describe It in terms of the finite phenomenon.

‘*Nor sun, nor moon, nor fire illumine That*’:—Herein is enumerated almost all the sources of light, blessed by which the physical eyes experience vision. To see a thing is to know the thing; and in order that the organ of vision might use its powers of seeing it is not only sufficient that objects are in front of it but they must also be bathed in light. In a medium of light alone can the eyes illumine forms and colour. Again, we perceive not only the forms of the objects in the world outside, but the ears illumine the sounds, the nose illumines the smell, the tongue perceives the tastes, the skin understands the touch. Each instrument illumines its objects. Nor even this is the all. We can perceive our feelings, and we do perceive our ideas. The “light” in which we perceive thus all our sense objects, all our emotions, and all our thoughts, is the Light of Consciousness, by which alone we become Aware of all our experiences.

This Light of Consciousness cannot be illumined by the sources of gross light perceived in the world outside such as the Sun, the Moon or the Fire.* In fact, the very light of the Sun or the Moon or of the Fire is an “object” of our Consciousness: We are constantly conscious of it. An *object* of perception cannot illumine the *subject* that perceives it—the subject and object cannot be at any time one and the same. The awareness by which we come to experience

* For more details on this topic refer DISCOURSES ON KATHOPANISHAD by the same author . II. 5-15

all our Life's joys and sorrows is the Eternal Self, and to realize that Consciousness is indicated as the supreme Goal by the Geeta.

' *That is My Supreme Abode* ':—This State of Consciousness into which we can rise up on transcending the agitations of the mind and intellect,* is described here as the Abode of the Divine, the Dwelling Place Supreme, wherein we can confidently make an appointment with Truth and "meet" the Infinite!

Utilitarians, as we are, it is sure that all seekers will doubt whether the experience of the Truth is worth having at such a tremendous effort, because is there not a risk of we falling back again into our present confusions and getting deluded by a finite pain-ridden world of plurality? This is denied and the seekers are assured, for the third time continuously in this stanza, when Krishna qualifies "My Supreme Abode" as one "*to which having gone none returns.*"

It is an experienced fact in life that when one has mastered a knowledge it is almost impossible for one to make any more mistakes in it; to a great musician to sing deliberately out of tune in disharmonious notes is as difficult as it is for a beginner to sing correctly. Having known a language, to try to talk ungrammatically is as difficult as for the illiterate to talk correctly. If in the imperfect world of imperfect knowledge a cultured man, educated and artistic, cannot fall back freely into the levels of the uncivilised and the illiterate, how much more must it be an impossible

* On accomplishing the spiritual conditions laid down in stanza 5, above.

act for the Perfect, ever thereafter, to come back and fall into the earlier confusions and ignorance?*

It is one of the rarest stanzas in the religious literature of the world which in so simple a style has indicated so exhaustively the Unconditioned, Pure Self, the Infinite Reality. In Hinduism, it has always been emphasised that after death there is a continuity of existence and the individual who has expressed himself as a personality in its previous body continues its biography with a new embodiment and under a new set of environments. The individuality thus undergoing experiences of birth and death repeatedly is called the *Jeeva* or the individual personality. This *Jeeva* is the Eternal Light of Consciousness playing upon, and seemingly conditioned by the subtle body, constituted of the mind-intellect equipment. In short, death is only a phenomena wherein, a given subtle body changes its physical equipment, seeking 'fresh fields and postures new' for its expression and expansion. This process is not the reaching of the Infinite; for, 'My Abode' is that 'wherein having gone there is no return'.

To explain this possible doubt, the structure and the nature that constitute the ego (Jeeva) is explained in the following stanzas.

* I know I am ineffectually arguing because I am conscious that intellectually any argument raised on this point can be easily scorned at and it is for the very same reason our scriptures, as I said at the beginning of my discourse on this stanza, have adopted the method of over-statement and repetition in driving home into us this truth.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥७॥

7. *mamai va mso jivaloke*
jivabhutah sanatanah
manahsasthani ndriyani
prakrtisthani karsati

मम-My, एव-even, अंशः-portion, जीवलोके- in the world of life, जीवभूतः - having become a soul, सनातनः- eternal, मनःषष्ठानि-with mind as the sixth, इन्द्रियाणि-the (five) sense-organs of perception, प्रकृतिस्थानि-abiding in Prakriti, कर्षति-draws (to itself).

7. An eternal portion of Myself having become a living soul in the world of life, and abiding in Prakriti draws (to itself) the (five) senses with mind for the sixth.

“*A Ray of Myself*” :—The Infinite has no parts : can suffer no divisions within Itself. And yet, just as with reference to the four walls of my room I consider the ‘room-space’ as different from the ‘outer-space’, so too, with reference to a given mind-intellect vehicle, the Infinite Light of Consciousness playing upon it is considered by the ignorant as limited by the very vehicle. The Moon-in-the-bucket will dance and break up into bits when the waters in the bucket trembles at the touch of a passing breeze. Even if a million such reflected Moons have broken and shattered, the immortal Moon in the heavens will not suffer any self-destruction. Similarly, the ego-centric personality

(*Jeeva*) born out of the Consciousness playing upon a given subtle-body suffers no limitation. Even though the ego changes with its joys and sorrows, with its knowledge and ignorance, with its peace and agitations, the essential nature of the Consciousness Infinite that sparkles in our hearts is Eternal indeed, and hence the stanza qualifies the Self in man as ‘ *the Eternal Jeeva in the world of Jeevas.*’

“ *Attracts the senses* ” :—This Spark of Consciousness vibrates the entire body with life, renders existence possible for a living creature, maintains by its mere presence, the sense-faculties and the mental-capacities around Itself. No doubt these are faculties that belong to *matter* . But at the same time these powers of seeing, hearing, etc , and also of feeling, thinking, etc , are not the powers of the sense-organs or of the inner organs (*Anthahkarana*). They are expressions of the Spirit when It functions through matter, and hence, it is said that along with the mind the five senses “ *abiding in the Prakrithi* ”* it functions. That this conditioned-self is experienced as the limited ego, the mortal, because of our ignorance, or error of judgment that It is only a portion as it were, an imaginary portion of the indivisible whole, etc.,—have all been proved earlier in the Geeta.†

“ *When does the Infinite draws these faculties around It?* ”

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।

गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥८॥

* Refer Chapter XIII : DISCOURSES ON GEETA, by Chinmaya.

† i.e , these faculties have their respective seats-of-expression in world of matter, the body.

8. sariram yad avapnoti
yac ca py utkramati svarah
gṛhitvā tani samyati
vayir gandhan iva sayat

शरीरम्—A body, यत्—when, अवाप्नोति—obtains, यत्—when, च and, अपि—also, उत्क्रामति—leaves, ईश्वरः— the Lord, गृहीत्वा—taking, एतानि—these, संयाति—goes, वायुः— the wind, गन्धान्—the scents, इव—as, आशयात्—from (their) seats, (the flowers).

8. When the Lord obtains a body, and when He leaves it, He takes these and goes (with them) as the wind takes the scents from their seats (the flowers)

“ *When the Lord acquires a body* ” :—The infinite conditioned by the mind-intellect is the *Jeeva*, and the *Jeeva* takes to itself various bodies from time to time and incarnates in different environments, which are ordered by its own burning desires and aspirations, and which are most suited for it to exhaust and fulfil all its demands. From the moment the *Jeeva* enters the body till it leaves, in short constantly, it keeps these sense faculties and mental impressions at all times with itself. In fact, the subtle-body includes all these faculties *.

At death the subtle-body departs from the gross-body and it is left inert. If systematically observed the dead body will be found to maintain, no doubt, the shape of the very individual that it was, but has no more any sense faculty or

* Refer ATMA BODHAM by Swami Chinmayananda . Stanza 13 page 25 wherein the seventeen items that constitute the subtle-body have been described

mental ability or intellectual capacity, that it had expressed before. These expressions, physical, mental and intellectual, were that which gave the body so long its own impressive individual personality stature. All these constitute the subtle-body and, that gross-body bereft of its subtle essence is called the dead body.

At the time of death, the subtle-body, as it is described here, moves off gathering unto itself all faculties, "*as the wind takes scents from their resting places*": a passing breeze is not at any time separate from atmospheric air that is everywhere, and yet, when the breeze passes over a flower or some sandal-paste, or a scent-bottle—which are all seats of fragrance—it carries with it the respective aroma. Similarly, the subtle-body when it moves out carries with it the senses, mind, and intellect, not in any gross form but as mere "fragrance" of what all they had lived, felt and thought of. Thus viewed, the mind is nothing but a bundle of *Vasanas*. These *Vasanas* can exist only in the Infinite Consciousness, and the Light of Awareness dazzling on the *Vasanas* is called the "individual personality"—*Jeeva*.

In this stanza the *Jeeva* is called the Lord (*Iswara*) only because the "individual personality" is the Lord of the body, that orders, commands and regulates all its actions, feeling and thoughts. Just as an officer on receiving transfer orders packs up his belongings and moves out of the present residence, and having reached the new seat of appointment unpacks and spreads out his furniture for his comforts, so too at the time of parting from one body the subtle-body gathers itself from the gross "dwelling place"* and on reaching the new physical structure it again spreads itself

* BHOGA AYATHANAM—Refer ATMAHODAM by Swamiji—Stanza 15.

out to use its faculties through that new "hut-of-experience". These stanzas are really a summary of the Upanishadic declarations*,

This subtle-body, enumerated in the previous stanzas roughly as "the five senses and the mind as the sixth", is being more clearly explained in the following stanzas.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।

अधिष्ठाय मनश्चैवं विषयानुपसेवते ॥९॥

9. *srotram caksuh sparsanam ca
rasanam ghranam eva ca
adhisthaya manas ca yam
visayan upasevate*

श्रोत्रम्-The ear, चक्षुः-the eye, स्पर्शनम् - the (organ of) touch, च-and, रसनम्=the (organ of) taste, घ्राणम्-the (organ of) smell, एव-even, च-and अधिष्ठाय-presiding over, मनः-the mind, च-and, अयम्-he, विषयान्-objects of the senses, उपसेवते-enjoys.

9. Presiding over the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste and the smell, so also the mind, He enjoys the sense objects.

The *Jeeva* through the equipment of the mind enjoys the world of objects available in the new environment, through the sense organs of hearing, seeing, touching, tasting

* Refer DISCOURSES ON AITREYA UPANISHAD by Swami Chinmayananda.

and smelling, which are expressed through their respective organs of the ear, the eye, the skin, the tongue and the nose.

The pure Light of Consciousness never illumines any object, because in the Pure Light of the Infinite there are no objects at all to illumine. It is only the Light of Consciousness that is reflected at the mind-intellect * that becomes the special beam of Light, the intelligence, in which alone the sense-objects become illumined. That is why very often when we are thinking intensively on some problem, even if some of our friends come in front of us and talk to us, we neither see nor hear them. The image of the object has already fallen on the eye-wall and the sound of the speaker has made the necessary stimulation of the tympanium of the ears, and yet, we see nothing, we hear nothing, because the conscious mind is turned elsewhere. Therefore, using the mind along with each sense separately, the individualised ego—Jeeva—the Dweller in the body, enjoys the sense-objects such as sound, form, touch, etc.

If the Consciousness which is Eternal and Perfect is so intimately present in every experience of man how is that we, who are living through vivid and real experiences at every moment of our existence, miss to recognise this Divine Perfection, which is so constantly with us at all times and everywhere? The Self is visible only to the eye-of-knowledge :

उक्तामन्तं स्थितं वापि मुञ्चानं वा गुणान्तिम् ।

विमूढा नानुपश्यन्ति पश्यन्ति ज्ञान चक्षुषः ॥१०॥

* Refer commentary on the ATMA BODHAM by Swamiji : Stanza 25.

10. *utkramantam sthitam va pi*
bhujanam va gunanvitam
vimudha na nupasvanti
pasyanti jnanacaksusah

उत्क्रामन्तम्-Departing, स्थितम्-staying, वा-or, अपि-also, भुञ्जानम् - enjoying, वा-or, गुणान्वितम्-united with the Gunas, विमूढाः-the deluded, न-not, अनुपश्यन्ति-do see (Him), पश्यन्ति-behold (Him), ज्ञानचक्षुषः-those who possess the Eye-of-knowledge.

10. Him who departs, stays and enjoys, who is united with the Gunas, the deluded do not see ; but they behold, who possess Eye-of-knowledge.

It is true everywhere that a common man, though he may observe an object, yet he may not fully and correctly understand it. The better understanding of things is always reserved for the man of knowledge. Everybody can read a great piece of literature, but only a literary genius alone can come to comprehend and enjoy fully the vision expressed in and through artistic finish of the quoted piece. Only a jeweller can really estimate the quality and worth of a jewel, even though all can look at it. Everyone can hear music, but only a musician can judge and experience the subtle beauties in a masterly recital. Similarly, every one of us, so long as life resides in us, can perceive, feel and think, and yet, it is only the wise-man who can come to recognise and live the Infinite Essence of Life Itself.

The Infinite Self is at all times present, and never is there a time when it is not. When *leaving* the body, the subtle-body is vitalised by the Presence of the Spirit. While the body is *existing* the Self is illuminating all experiences.

While *enjoying* the pleasures of life it is the Light of Consciousness that illumines for us all our mental experiences and our intellectual judgements. At moments, our entire mental climate changes from peaceful calmness (*Sattwa*) to riotous agitations (*Rajas*), or into a dull inertia (*Tamas*), and at all these moments, whatever be the nature of the climate within, they are all experienced only by the Light of Consciousness. And yet, the unintelligent perceives not this Conscious Knowledge that is constantly aware of his moment-to-moment experiences.

An average man is so much preoccupied by the details of experiences that he, clinging to his desires for enjoying the outer beauty of things and situations, comes to overlook and fail to recognise the steady Light of Consciousness in him, in the presence of which alone can any experience be ever possible. Those who have got the necessary detachment from the minor details of the outer field-of-experience* alone come to a recognise and live the joys of the pure Self—the Subject.

This special vision available to the man of Perfection is called the '*Eye of (Wisdom)*' in the stanza. This is not a special inner organ as such: it only represents an extra faculty that develops in the spiritual seeker, who, with it comes to perceive the deeper significances and subtler suggestions in the superficially chaotic play of plurality. Those who have not got this intuitive perception must necessarily fail to have this vision of the play of the Immortal Divine in and through the day-to-day activities and happenings. The same idea is more artistically stressed by Sri Sankara else-

* Refer Chapter XIII-KSHETRAM-the items that constitute the Field-of-experience have been enumerated in Stanzas : 5 & 6.

where also.* This 'Eye of Knowledge' cannot be developed unless the discipline of self-perfection is not properly practised. The subjective technique of self-integration (*Yoga*) can be successfully brought about only when complete integration of personality has taken place.

A few only come to ultimately experience this Self, while others, even though striving, fail to have this realisation. Why?.....

यतन्तो योगिनश्चैनं पश्यन्त्यात्मन्यवस्थितम् ।

यतन्तोऽप्यकृतात्मानो नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥११॥

11. *yatanto yoginas cai nam
pasyanty atmany avasthitam
yatanto py akrtatmano
nai nam pasyanty acetasaḥ*

यतन्तः - Striving (for perfection), योगिनः - the Yogins (seekers), च - and, एनम् - this, पश्यन्ति - see, आत्मनि - in the self, अवस्थितम् - dwelling, यतन्तः - striving, अपि - also, अकृतात्मानः - unrefined, न - not, एनम् - this, पश्यन्ति - see, अचेतसः - the unintelligent.

11. The seekers striving (for perfection) behold Him dwelling in the Self; but, the unrefined and unintelligent, even though striving see Him not.

Those who are successful in their attempts at stilling their mind and cleaning their intellect off its disturbing

* Read gTMgBODHgM by Swami Chinmayananda stanzas 47 and 65.

attachments and desires come to recognise the glory of the Self and experience its Infinite beauty. But it is also true that all those who put in mechanically plenty of self-effort (*Yoga*) need not necessarily succeed. Hundreds are there who complain that though they were regular in their spiritual programme for years, no appreciable amount of self-development has come to them. One may wonder why should this be so ; and especially when majority of sincere seekers come to complain their unsatisfactory development or utter failure in their spiritual endeavour, in these democratic days of majority rule, very easily can we vote down *Yoga* and declare that it is not a technique of self-perfection at all. It is only perhaps a wrong prescription given out by some ineffectual dreamers, in moments of their poetic fancies.

This mooted point is being answered here very logically. “*Though striving, those of unrefined mind and devoid of wisdom, perceive Him not*”. Two conditions are unavoidable if meditation is to ultimately yield its promised result. (A) The purification of mind is generally defined as removal of agitations (*Vikshepa*) created by one’s false ego-centric attachments with sense-objects. (B) Also, the intellect is to be tuned up properly with a correct understanding of the nature of the Self, and thus all doubts of the misty mind (*Avarana*) that veil its perception are also to be removed through study, reflection and practice. If these two adjustments are not properly accomplished, through practice of devotion (*Bhakti Yoga*) and service (*Karma Yoga*), all attempts at meditation in the Path of Knowledge can reward us only with failures.

In short, the stanza emphasises that those whose minds have not been properly regenerated through practice of self-control and subjugation of the senses, and who have not

renounced and abandoned their evil ways of looking at things from a very limited ego-centric stand point, whose pride has not yet been subdued—such seekers, however sincerely and ardently they may meditate, have little or no chance of unfolding themselves into their diviner possibilities; *they behold Him not*. Though the Self is the nearest and, therefore, most easily perceivable, yet, all do not see Him, because of their complete slavery to the enchantments of the sense-objects.

Hereafter, in the following four stanzas, the Immanence of the Lord—(A) as the All-illuminating Light of Consciousness, (B) as the All-sustaining Life, (C) as the subjective warmth of Life, in all living organisms, and (D) as the Self in all the hearts—is being described.

So far the Self has been indicated as (1) That which cannot be illumined by the known phenomenal sources of light, such as the Sun, the Moon or the Fire; (2) That which having reached none returns back from that State of Perfection; (3) That of which the individual entities (*Jeevas*) are only as though a part.

To show this very same Goal as the Essence of all and the Reality behind all these experiences, Lord Krishna proceeds to give a short summary of His manifestations, in the following four verses :

यदादित्यगतं तेजो जगद्भासयतेऽखिलम् ।

यच्चन्द्रमसि यच्चाग्नौ तत्तेजो विद्धि मामकम् ॥१२॥

12. *yad adityagatam tejo*
jagad bhasayate khilam
yac candramasi yac ca gnau
tat tejo viddhi mamakam

यत् - Which, आदित्यगतम् - residing in the sun,
 तेजः - light, जगत् - the world, भासयते - illumines,
 अखिलम् - whole, यत् - which, चन्द्रमसि - in the moon,
 यत् - which, च and, अग्नौ - in the fire, तत् - that, तेजः -
 light, विद्धि - know, मामकम् - mine.

12. That Light which is residing in the sun illumines
 the whole world, and that which is in the moon
 and in the fire—know that Light to be
 Mine.

We who are familiar with the modern scientific observations must necessarily get rattled a bit when we read the meaning of the stanza. But without losing our balance if we were to quietly contemplate over the statement, expressed in this stanza, we shall realise that our confusions are only because of the limitations of our own intellect—which we have cultivated by the study of an intellectually limited science. In the early class-rooms we are told very scientifically that earth is a portion of the Sun that has fallen down from it and got held within the web of mutual attractions of the planets, and cooled now to the modern temperature. But if we ask the question where did the Sun itself had come from, the teacher of science is not only uncomfortable, but he is positively tickled to a justifiable bad temper! Science can move only in a field where it can gather the necessary data to calculate and to prove.

But philosophy seeks to satisfy the questionings of the human intellect regarding the Ultimate Source of all things, even if the necessary scientific data for such an attempt is not at present available in the laboratory observations. There is a definite frontier at which the intellect and its observations, its logic and conclusions, its reasoning and

assertions, must necessarily exhaust and cry a halt. And yet, the question is not fully solved, for, even there we find an honest intellect still left wondering:. Why!. How!! What!!! There Science is silent. Where the science has fulfilled itself and from where onwards its light fails to illumine the path, there philosophy starts its pilgrimage towards the Absolute Satisfaction.

Here, in the stanza, it says that the very light which emerges from the Sun which illumines the whole world, is the Light that is emerging from Me, the Infinite Consciousness. Nay, the light that comes from the Moon, the light that emanates from the fire, are all expressions of the Infinite Reality when It expresses through the moon and fuel.

The manifestations are different because the equipments are different: the *light* in the bulb, the *heat* in the furnace, the *movement* in the fan are all indeed different manifestations, because the bulb, the furnace and the fan are dissimilar equipments; but the energy, the electricity, is one and the same. In brief, Consciousness expressed through the Sun manifests as Sun-light, expressed through Moon is the Moonlight, through the dry fuel is the fire—and yet, all of them are in reality nothing but the Infinite Itself, and these are Its glorious manifestations. The Infinite manifests in order to create the conducive environment, in which alone the world can exist, wherein as Lord He can come to express Himself and play out His game of multiplicity.”

Moreover :—

गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।

पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥१३॥

13. gam avisya ca bhutani
dharayamy aham ojasa
pusnami cau sadhih sarvah
somo bhutva rasatmakah

गाम्—The earth, आविश्य—permeating, च - and
भूतानि - all beings, धारयामि - (I) support, अहम्—I,
ओजसा - by (My) energy, पुष्णामि - (I) nourish, च—
and, औषधीः - the herbs, सर्वाः - all, सोमः - moon,
भूत्वा—having become, रसात्मकः—juicy.

13. Permeating the earth I support all beings by (My)
energy ; and having become the juicy moon I
nourish all herbs.

“ *Permeating the earth I support all beings with My energy* ”.—Even long before artificial manure was discovered the earth had, no doubt, a long history, and some of those eras in the bygone days were, perhaps, more over-populated than in the present. And yet, the earth continued to sustain life. The capacity in the earth to sustain life and nourish it, the warmth and the mineral contents, are all, says the Lord, “ *My own vitality* ”. Meaning, the same Consciousness which through the Sun became the necessary warmth of the atmosphere, has, while expressing through the earth, become the potential fertility of the soil and the life-giving secret capacity in the earth.

“ *Having become the Moon-light I nourish all the plants* ”: The same Eternal Consciousness while functioning through the Moon expresses Itself as Moon-light and refills each plant of its potential essence. If this passage was rejected by members of a few generations back, children of the most modern scientific knowledge shall not dare to question it

now!! Modern agricultural science has come to prove to-day that the planetary organisation, especially the Moon, has got something strange to do with the productivity in agriculture! Recent experiments have been reported wherein tomato seedlings sown on the full-Moon-day and plucked again on a full-Moon-day were found to yield a better crop. In the West a Scientist to-day is revolutionising vegetable cultivation and agriculture by his new theories and experiments on lines suggested above.

Shifting our eyes from the West to the Indian villages, even though they may not explain and prove the glories of some of their practices, they too have a traditional knowledge of the correct time when they have to sow and reap. Maize, potatoes, rice are some of the examples wherein the Indian cultivator by tradition knows when to sow and when to reap. When he consults the almanac to know the right time for sowing, etc, the modern scholars of agriculture in India, especially when they have learnt our cultivation in foreign lands, have a knack of laughing at the native wisdom!

Indeed it is accepted on all sides that that the paddy preserved for seeds is to be dried not only in the Sun, but also must lie exposed to the Moon. The Natureopaths keep some of their preparations—as also the Ayurvedic physician—exposed to the Moon for certain number of days, and they claim that the medicines gain thereby certain curative powers.

All these above facts are only touched up lightly here to prove that the declaration in the stanza is not totally unscientific.

To read the above and the present stanza together, the Sun, the Moon and the fire are the sources of all energy in the world, but the very source of the energy

from where it flows through these phenomenal expressions is the Infinite Consciousness. Not only that it is the same Consciousness that functions through the earth and gives the field their special capacity to sustain and nourish the vegetable world, but when they grow up it is again Consciousness, functioning through the Moon and manifesting as Moon-Light, that fills each vegetable with its essential food value (Vitamins ?).

Moreover :—

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥१४॥

14. *aham vaisavanaro bhutva
praninam deham asritah
pranapanasamayuktah
pacamy annam chaturvidham*

अहम्-I, वैश्वानरः - (the fire) Vaisvanara, भूत्वा-
having become, प्राणिनाम्-of living beings, देहम्-
the body, आश्रितः - abiding, प्राणापानसमायुक्तः - asso-
ciated with Prana and Apana, पचामि-(I) digest,
अन्नम्-food, चतुर्विधम्-four-fold.

14. I having become (the fire) *Vaisvanara*, abide in the
body of beings, and associated with *Prana*
and *Apana*, digest the four-fold food.

“ *Abiding in the body of living beings as the Vaiswanara* ”:
The same Supreme Consciousness is that which expresses as
the warmth-of-life in all living creatures. That physical
structure from which all warmth has gone is dead. Meto-

bolism creates the body-heat and the functions of the inner organisms continue automatically without any conscious effort on the part of the individual, so long as life is pulsating in the body.

The modern experimental science, especially Biology, very often escapes behind some phrase or phrases, whenever it has to admit its ignorance, or the limitations of its scope. For example, they will explain the entire circulatory system and conclude that the heart is the seat of all pumping, but for which the blood would have clotted in the arteries and veins themselves. But, if you ask them what makes the heart pump they will cleanly escape behind a seemingly satisfactory term—the “involuntary actions” of the muscles in the walls of the heart. To an honest thinker this is no explanation at all; he still asks who or what controls the “involuntary” actions. The question has no answer so far in Science.

Here, the Eternal Reality is indicated as that mighty Life which when pulsating through the body manifests Itself as the “digestive fire” (*Vaiswanara*) which assimilates the food taken in.

“*I digest the four-fold-food*”—This digestive power in a healthy living organism assimilates all types of food. The entire variety of human diets are classified under four heads in Sanskrit as : food that should be (i) masticated, (ii) swallowed, (iii) sucked, and (iv) licked. These four types embrace all kinds of food, vegetarian and non-vegetarian, prepared and unprepared, raw and ripe. All things consumed by the mouth are digested, assimilated and absorbed because of the digestive system and the power in the digestive system is nothing but a manifestation of the all-present Principle of Life.

“*Associated with Prana and Apana*”:—*Prana* and the *Apana* are the two physiological functions of “perception” and of “excretion” that are present in all living creatures. Here, however, these terms can be considered in their broadest general sense. Not only that the Consciousness as the “digestive fire” assimilate the food that has reached the belly, but it is again Life manifested as the peristaltic movement (*Prana*) that receives and rolls down the food swallowed through the oesophagus into the belly. After digesting, assimilating and absorbing the nutrition, it is again the same Divine Spark of Life that gives the intestines its capacities to throw out (*Apana*) the undigested and unnecessary by-products. In short, it is the Lord that helps us to swallow the food, it is Lord again that assimilates the food; it is Lord again that presides over the function of eliminating the by-products.

To recapitulate the chain of manifestations indicated so far. Through the Sun the Lord expresses as the Sunlight giving the necessary warmth for the atmosphere to sustain life on the surface of the earth. By His vitality He feeds the earth with a capacity to nourish the plant kingdom. As the Moonlight it is He again who fills the vegetables with their food contents. It is He again as *Prana* conveys the food from the mouth into the belly, assimilates the food therein, and ultimately supervises the excretory system and its functions. In this total process, the individual lives the life of receiving stimuli (*Prana*) and responding out into the world (*Apana*). On the whole, the phenomenal powers, the material world outside, the matter vehicles and their functions, and all manifestations at different levels are of the same Eternal Divinity.

Moreover :

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टो

मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो

वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥१५॥

15. *sarvasya ca ham hrđi samnivistō
mattah smrtir jñanam apohanam ca
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedantakrd vedavid eva ca ham*

सर्वस्य-Of all, च-and, अहम्-I, हृदि-in the heart,
सन्निविष्टः - seated, मत्तः - from Me, स्मृतिः - memory,
ज्ञानम्-knowledge, अपोहनम्-(their) absence, च-and,
वेदैः-by the Vedas, च - and, सर्वैः - (by) all, अहम् - I,
एव-even, वेद्यः-to be known, वेदान्तकृत्-the author of
the Vedanta, वेदवित् - the knower of Veda, एव-
even, च-and, अहम्-I.

15. And I am seated in the hearts of all ; from Me are
memory, knowledge, as well as their absence.
I am verily that which has to be known in all
the Vedas ; I am indeed the author of the
Vedanta, and the “ knower of the Vedas ”
am I.

“ I am seated in the hearts of all ”:—If there be thus an
Infinite Omni-potent Power that manifests Itself as the
different things and beings in the world, how can a seeker
make his pilgrimage towards It and meet this great Divine ?
Lord Krishna says that He lives in the hearts of all living
creatures. Here the *heart* does not mean the physiological

“ heart ” but it is the meta-physical *heart*. The term *heart* in philosophy means “ mind which has been trained to entertain constantly the positive qualities of love, tolerance, mercy, charity, kindness, and the like ”. A peaceful joyous mind, settled in tranquillity, alert and vigilant to receive new messages of the higher inspirations is called the *heart*. The Infinite ‘ *dwells in the heart* ’ means that, though He is available everywhere, the Lord is most conspicuously self-evident, during meditation, in the *heart* of the meditator.

‘ *From Me are memory, knowledge, as well as their loss* ’ : The Consciousness Divine has been declared above as revelling in the heart of every living creature. This Light of Life seems to have no particular justification to exist since all perceptions are through the body, all feelings are through the mind, all thoughts are through the intellect. Geeta here declares what exactly is then the special grace of Consciousness. It is the Light of Consciousness that illumines all our experiences in Life. From this Supreme alone all memories, knowledge, as well as forgetfulness come to us. Memory is constituted of our experiences of the past, stored away in our understanding, which guide our present and future activities. All education and knowledge that we have at this moment are all memories from the past. Unless we are aware of these memories they will not be available in our present life. Reacting properly with the present sets of stimuli and thereby gaining fresh and vivid experiences is the process of widening our field of knowledge ; and all these processes are possible only in the Light of Life.

Acquisition of new knowledge, presupposes our capacity to give up our false notions. Imperfect knowledge gets weeded out when a bosom is cultivating new knowledge. A capacity to forget is an essential pre-requisite in acquiring

new knowledge The stanza under discussion explains that all these subjective activities; mental and intellectual, arise from and are maintained by the Conscious Principle, the Lord Himself.

‘It is I that is to be known by all the Vedas’: In all scriptures of the world, in and through the various portions of all the Vedas in India, Krishna says, this Infinite Consciousness is the one common factor that has been extolled and adored. To realise this is to reach the goal of life, the fulfilment of existence. The Consciousness that revels in the hearts of all living creatures is the Non-dual, Immortal Reality, the all pervading, and It is the only substratum for the pluralistic world of experiences.

“ I am indeed the Author of the Vedanta, as well as the knower of the Vedas ”: Since Consciousness alone is the Eternal Reality, and everything else is a projection upon it, the very essence in them, as expressed in the Vedas also, is this Consciousness. The seeker—who listens to the Vedas, reflects upon their wisdom, and ultimately comes to experience the fulfilment of his life—is also at no stage anything other than the same Consciousness.

In short* it has been said that the Consciousness is the Light in the Sun ; it is the same Consciousness that fertilises the Earth ; the Consciousness as the Moonlight supplies the the food-value to the plant-kingdom ; it is Truth Itself as the body-warmth that presides over the assimilation of the food within the body and supervises the processes of life’s transactions with the world outside ; and it is the same Light of Consciousness that makes it possible for us to gain

* That is to summarise the previous four stanzas.

experience, store away knowledge, and replace ignorance with better knowledge. The Eternal Principle which thus expresses as the phenomenal powers—which with their activities make it possible for life to exist on the surface of the earth, and which helps the higher life to grow and expand into wisdom—is the very theme indicated in the Vedas as the Eternal Reality and to know It and bring It under our experience is to know the Infinite.

Till now * are enumerated the glories of Narayana, the Blessed Lord, as manifested through the various vehicles such as the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, the body, the mind and the Intellect. Now, in the following verses Lord Krishna points out the True Nature of the Infinite as the unconditioned (*Nirupadhika*), All-pervading (*Saivaghatam*) and Eternal (*Nityam*). This Infinite Reality transcends all intellectual concepts, such as the Finite and the Infinite—as the Perishable and the Imperishable.

Considering the relative world of experiences Bhagavan says :

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणिभूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥१६॥

16. *dvav imau purusau loke*
ksaras ca ksara eva ca
ksarah sarvani bhutani
kutastho ksara uchyate

द्वौ—Two, इमौ – these, पुरुषौ – (two) Purushas (beings), लोके – in the world, क्षरः – the perishable,

* All the previous four stanzas.

च-and, अक्षर:-the imperishable, एव-even, च-and, क्षर:-the perishable, सर्वाणि-all, भूतानि-beings, कूटस्थः the immutable (unchanging), अक्षरः -the imperishable, उच्यते-is called.

- 16 Two Purushas are there in this world, the Perishable and the Imperishable. All beings are the Perishable and the *Kutastha* is called the Imperishable.

Earlier* we had an exhaustive discussion of the Field-of-matter and the Knower-of-the-field. The discussion so far we had in this chapter must prove that the Sun, the warmth in the atmosphere, the earth, its potentialities, the plant-kingdom, and man and his capacity,—all of them, together constituting the Field-of-matter, are nothing other than the Supreme itself.

† The Infinite Consciousness when It becomes the light and heat of Sun, the fertility of the Earth, the essence in the plant, the Consciousness in the heart, the faculties of knowing and remembering, etc., they are all different forms of Consciousness alone. Thus, the fact that the Field-of-matter itself is nothing other than the Spirit was already demonstrated. The only difference is that the Spirit when It has spread itself as matter it looks as though it is subjected to change and destruction. Thus the “ realm of matter ” is indicated in this stanza as the Perishable (*Kshara Purusha*).

With reference to this Field-of-Matter (*Kshetram*) alone can there be the Knower-of-the-Field (*Kshetrasya*) said the

* Geeta Chapter XIII

† If a goldsmith, in order to make a chain, beats out a piece of gold, into bar, draws it into lengths of wire, cut it into

earlier chapter. So too here, with reference to the “Perishable *Purusha*” there is the Spirit, the Self, which is the “*Imperishable Purusha*”.

* In the *relative* field of experience when we talk with reference to the inert and perishable world of matter, the Spirit, is indicated as the Conscious Principle, which is Imperishable. With reference to one's wife alone one is called the husband, when I have a son I will become a father. Similarly, with reference to the perishable and the changing matter-envelopments, the Consciousness is indicated as the Imperishable and the Changeless. The body changes; from childhood to youth, from youth to old age; the mind changes in its quality of feeling and emotion: the intellect, with each added knowledge and experience, is ever in a state of change. But all these changes, one is aware of constantly. This Consciousness which has been constantly recognising and illumining, all the changes, at all levels, all through the individual's life, is necessarily changeless. This Conscious Principle is called here as *Akshara*—remember again, only with reference to and as a contact with the perishable, the *Kshara*, It is called *Akshara*.

This Immutable and Impesishable principle of Life is the common Self in all living creatures at all times. That this Self in the midst of change remains changless, and that all changes can take place only in contact with It are both

bits, knock each-bit into rings, and solder them together to form a chain, and if the chain ultimately is made up of gold, all through the intervening processes it must have been gold alone. The bar, the wire, the bits and the rings are all different forms of the same gold.

* IN SANSKRIT the Life Principle is called PURUSHA, because It dwells in the city-of-the-physical-body PURISAYANATH—resting in the body.)

indicated by the metaphor suggested in the term used here *Koodasthah**.

Distinct from these two—the Perishable and the Imperishable—untainted by the imperfections of these two relative conditions is the Highest Spirit :

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य विभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥१७॥

17. *uttamah purusas tv anyah
paramatme ty udahrtah
yo lokatrayam avisya
bibharty avyaya isvarah*

उत्तमः-The Supreme, पुरुषः-Purusha, तु-but, अन्यः-another, परमात्मा-the Highest Self, इति-thus, उदाहृतः-called, यः-who, लोकत्रयम्-the three worlds, आविश्य-pervading, विभर्ति-sustains, अव्ययः-the indestructible, ईश्वरः-Lord.

17. But distinct is the Supreme *Purusha* called the Highest Self, the indestructible Lord, who pervading the three worlds (waking, dream, and deep-sleep), sustains them.

*But distinct is the Highest Spirit spoken of as the Supreme Self :—*With reference to my own children alone am I really known as a father. With reference to my duty or status I may have yet another name. Similarly, the Imperishable

* KODAM means anvil of the blacksmith : STHAHA means to sit ; KODASTHA means that which remains as an anvil of the blacksmith which allows every iron piece to change in its shape but itself remains changeless.

is a status and a dignity gained by the Spirit only with reference to the field of the Perishable around and about It, through which It manifests as the various expressions of Life. When I am dismissed from my job or my children have died, I am no more a father, nor can I any more claim my erstwhile official dignity. But that does not mean that I am in the absence of son and work an ultimate zero, a total non-entity. I still exist as “the son of *my* father”, in my individual capacity, devoid of all my special status and dignity born out of my relationship with my profession, or with my children. If this is understood the stanza is not very difficult.

Two chapters earlier it was discussed that the Knower-of-the-Field exists in the Field-of-knowing, and when the Field-of-matter is removed from the Knower-of-the Field what remains* is only the Knowing-Principle called the “knowledge”. Similarly, here when the perishable (*Kshara*) is transcended what remains is not the Imperishable (*Akshara*) but that which played as the “Perishable Purusha” and as the “Imperishable Purusha”. This Pure Spirit (*Purusha*) is spoken of as the Supreme Self, who ‘*penetrates and sustains the three worlds*’: “World” in Sanskrit means ‘realm of experience’. The three realms of experiences in which we eak out our life’s returns are the states of Waking, Dream and Deep-sleep. The same Self is the illuminator of all experiences in all the above three states of consciousness.

There are not three different types of *Purushas*; according to the limitations and conditions around the Spirit it looks different in its manifestations. A pot is in a room;

*Geeta: Chapter XIII—KASHETRAGNA minus KSHETRAM = GNA...Pure knowledge.

now the pot-space is a lesser part of the room-space and the room space is only a negligible portion of the total-space. At the same time pot-space minus the pot if understood as "space," it is the same space as the infinite-space. Now, in the above example, pot-space and the room-space are something other than the outer-space, inasmuch as conditioned as they are, they have gathered unto themselves certain limitations ; but the unconditioned pot-space and the room-space are nothing but the infinite-space ; break the pot, pull down the walls, the space that was the pot-space and the space that was the room-space have both become one with the infinite-space !

The Consciousness, Infinite, Itself in another form is the Perishable-field and as the Knower-of-the-Field the same Consciousness is the Imperishable reality in the perishable conditionings. But when these conditionings are transcended the same Self is experienced as the Supreme Self—the *Paramatman*.

Showing the etymology of the very term, Purushottam, Lord shows how He is really the Supreme :—

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥१८॥

18. *yasmat ksaram atito ham
aksarad api co ttamah
ato smi loke vede ca
prathitah purusottamah*

यस्मात्-As, क्षरम् - the perishable, अतीतः - transcend, अहम्-I, अक्षरात् - than the imperishable, अपि-also, च - and, उत्तमः - best, अतः - therefore, अस्मि-(I)

am, लोके - in the world, वेदे - in the Veda, च-and, प्रथितः-declared, पुरुषोत्तमः-the Highest Purusha.

18. As I transcend the perishable and am even higher than the Imperishable ; therefore, I am declared as the Purushottama (the Highest *Purusha*) in the world and in the Vedas.

Explaining the very word *Purushottama* Lord Krishna says that Pure Consciousness is higher than both the ‘perishable’ and the ‘imperishable.’ The perishable can continue its processes of change only against an imperishable truth. It is a scientific fact that no change is perceptible without reference to a changeless factor. If two trains are both moving in the same speed no movement is recognised by percievers in both the trains. If the changes in the world of matter : the body, the mind and the Intellect : are recognised as we do now, then there must be a steady Principle that illumines all these different changes. This constant Factor among the perishing is called the Imperishable.

This illumining Factor gathers its status as “imperishable” only with reference to the “perishable” realms. Once the perishable realms are transcended, the Imperishable amidst them itself comes to shine forth as the Pure Infinite, which is the *Purushothama*. Since the Truth, *Purushothama*, is experienced only on transcending both the “perishable” and the “imperishable,” the Absolute Truth is known by the term the Highest Spirit : *Purushothama*. This term is used to indicate the supreme Self both by the ancient sacred volumes (*Vedas*) and by the poets and writers of the world (*Loka*).

Now the Lord speaks of the fruits gained by one who realises the Supreme Truth as described above :

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।

स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥१९॥

19. *yo mam evam asammudho
janati purusottamam
sa sarvavid bhajati mam
sarvabhavena bharata*

यः-Who, माम् -Me, एवम् - thus, असंमूढः-undeluded, जानाति-knows, पुरुषोत्तमम्-the Supreme Purusha, सः-He, सर्ववित्-all - knowing, भजति - worships, माम्-Me, सर्वभावेन - with his whole being, भारत - O Bharata.

19. He who, undeluded, thus knows Me, the Supreme Purusha, he, All-knowing, worships Me with his whole being, O Bharata.

“*One, who undeluded* :”—Anandagiri, who has supplied notes on Shankara’s commentary on the Upanishads and the Geeta, explains “undeluded” as one who ‘Never looks upon the physical body, etc., as himself or as belonging to himself’. It means one who has totally detached oneself from one’s wrong identifications with the various vehicles in one and, therefore, also with the world of perceptions, feelings and thoughts, which these vehicles provide.

“*Thus Knows me* ”:—To “know” here is not a mere intellectual comprehension, but a deep subjective spiritual apprehension. The undeluded one who has thus experienced in himself that he is the *Purushothama*-principle Itself seems to be the suggestion here.

Such a one who has fully identified with the Infinite “Me” alone is a true devotee, who ‘worships Me with all

his being’; such a one is the greatest of devotees declares the Geetacharya. Identification with the beloved is everywhere the measure of love; greater the love greater our identification with the object of our love. Therefore, arithmetically, total identification should be the maximum love or devotion.

The Highest Spirit, Purushothama, being the Infinite Consciousness it is the ‘all-knower,’ inasmuch as whenever anything is known through perception, feeling or thought, it is the Principle of Consciousness that illumines it. One who has transcended one’s matter-equipments and has successfully sought and discovered one’s spiritual nature as the Infinite Consciousness, that individual, as the Supreme Awareness, is indicated here as the “all-knower” (*Sarva-vith*).

The knowledge of true nature of the Lord is the theme of this chapter and in the following concluding stanza Krishna extoles this theme, which gives liberation to man from all his flesh-born sorrows, mind-born agitations and the intellect-born restlessness.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।

एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥२०॥

20. *iti guhyatamam sastram*
idam uktam maya nagha
etad buddhva buddhiman syat
krtakrtyas ca bharata

इति-Thus, गुह्यतमम्-most secret, शास्त्रम्-science, (teaching) इदम्-this, उक्तम्-has been taught, मया-by me, अनघ-O sinless one, एतत्-this, बुद्ध्वा-knowing,

बुद्धिमान् - wise, स्यात् - becomes, कृतकृत्यः - (who has) accomplished all the duties, च - and, भारत - O Bharata.

20. Thus, this most secret science (teaching) has been taught by Me, O sinless one ; on knowing this, (a man) becomes wise, and all his duties are accomplished, O Bharata.

In this concluding stanza Krishna says that He has taught in this chapter "*the most secret science.*" The spiritual science (*Brahmavidya*) is termed as secret, not in the sense that it should not be given out to anybody, but that it is a knowledge which cannot of its own accord come to anyone, unless one is initiated into it by a Knower of Reality.

"*Oh ! sinless one*":—"Sin" means an act, a feeling, or a thought, which having perpetrated, entertained, or thought of, comes back after a time to agitate our bosoms with its insulting taunts and helpless regrets. In short, sin is the resultant of the past that comes to demean our self-estimate of ourselves and creates in us a lot of mental storm and the consequent mental dissipation. One who has thus an inward personality, which carries disturbing memories of undignified acts and cruel schemes, has indeed, a bosom that is ever agitated and restless. Such a mind-intelect-equipment cannot consistently apply itself to any serious and deep investigation into the subtle realm of the Pure Awareness that lies beyond the frontiers of the Intellect. Therefore, the term "sinless" in the context here only means "*Oh ! steady-minded, alert and vigilant student*".

He who has realised this Purushothama-state of Consciousness becomes *wise* inasmuch as he cannot thereafter

make any error of judgment in his life and consequently create confusions and sorrows for himself and others around.

The second of the benefits accrued by contacting the *Purushothama* state is the enjoyment of a complete sense of fulfilment (*Kritha-krithyatha*), a complete and overwhelming joy that comes to a man when he realises that he has fully accomplished what is expected of him. This is promised here in this stanza as the reward for the realisation of the *Purushothama-stage*.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन संवादे पुरुषोत्तमयोगो नाम
पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ॥

*om tad sad ity srimad bhagavadgeetasupanisatsu
brahmavidyayam yogasastre sri
krishnarjunasamvade
Purushotama-yogo Nama
Pancadaso Adhyayah.*

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagvad-Geeta, in the science of the Eternal, in the scriptures of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the Fifteenth Discourse ends entitled :

THE YOGA OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT.

For the detailed word-meaning of the Sankalpa vakya refer earlier chapters.*

* At the closing of chapters I and II.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER XVI

Every system of ethics catalogues a series of virtues and vices, and strangely enough all such systems read the same in spite of the fact that their Prophets were of different time and place. Irrespective of clai~~me~~, creed, race and tongue a good man is a good man. No doubt, there are slight differences between faith and faith, but such differences are found only in the Prophets, emphasis on the people's abstenion from certain vices and/or cultivation of certain virtues. And their special advices and appeals to the people are obviously determined by the sort of life lived by the majority of the people of their respective times and places.

The very same qualities accepted as virtues some three thousand years ago still exist as virtues, and even to day those who live them are considered to be virtuous. Strangely enough we find that human beings true to their type, are just the same in this uprorious present as they were in the peaceful past. In the chapter now under review, the entire mankind of all times and of all ages has been classified under

three types : (a) the Divinely Good *Deva*, (b) the Diabolically Fallen *Asura* and (c) the Incurrigibly Indifferent *Rakshasa*. However, the *Rakshasic* type is not taken up in the following stanzas, most probably because for that type, no conscious self development is ever available, and they have to be broken, recast and moulded again by the relentless hand of adversity.

Earlier¹ we had a discussion in which Krishna explained the three kinds of nature of the sentient beings *Prakritis*. Later on² the Field-of Experience *Kshetra* and the Knower-of-the-Field *Kshetragna* were in detail discussed. In conclusion, it was established that the Subject, the “Knower” is one in all “Fields”.

The natural question of a brilliant intellect at this stage of discussion could be only how and why the experiences are so varied from individual to individual even though the “Subject” is thus one and the same. It was explained³ that the “Field” is under the influence of different temperaments (*gunas*) and, therefore, no two individuals can experience a given field of happening in the same fashion. After thus discussing exhaustively how the Fields-of-Experience differ from one another on their changing tempers, we had a discourse from the Geetacharya⁴ on the essential nature of the Infinite and Eternal “Subject”, the Knower-of-the-Field. This Purushotham had been amply painted therein as the Transcendental State of Perfection and as Pure Knowledge.

Naturally, therefore, in the logical development of thought in the Geeta, the chapter now under our pen is

1 Chapter 9.

2 Chapter 13

3 Chapter 14.

4 Chapter 15.

discussing the types of manifestation that are available in the living world when the same "Knower", the one Eternal Spirit, expresses Itself through the variegated "Fields". In short, the logic of the sixteenth chapter can generally be a bit confusing to all hasty students; and there are daring critics who had come to the conclusion that more often than not "the Divine Song of the Lord is rather rambling." This is very unfair. The sequence in the thought development in chapter sixteen is from the ideas not yet concluded and left as such in chapter nine and the ideas merely touched up during the explanations in the preceding three chapters.

Another severe criticism generally levelled against Hindus is that as believers of the Non-dual Reality, Brahman, they have no respect for the moral and ethical values. Some critics compare the devotional religions, semetic or otherwise, with Vedanta and desperately strive to conclude with an unsubstantiated exaggeration of the nobler beauties of the former. The lie is given to this criticism; how consistently Vedanta insists upon the moral virtues as a prerequisite even to enter its portals is evident from the chapters of Geeta. And this chapter will reveal how exhaustively the Rishis had pointed out the mental contents of the good as compared with the filthy fil in the bad.

The anxiety of the Geeta is not to classify mankind as good and bad, and to promise a paradise for the good, and to curse the bad to endless damnation in a hell. The virtues enumerated here are the scientific observations made in the physical, mental and intellectual behaviours, when Life, the "Knower", pulsates through a *disciplined* "Field" and an *undisciplined* "Field" of Experience.

CHAPTER XVI

अथ षोडशोऽध्यायः

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥१॥

Sri Bhagavan Uvaca

1. *abhayam sattvasamsuddhir
jnanayogavyavasthitih
danam damas ca yajnas ca
svadhyayas tapa arjavam*

अभयम् - Fearlessness, सत्त्वसंशुद्धिः - purity of heart, ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः - steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, दानम् - alms-giving, दमः - control of the senses, च - and, यज्ञः - sacrifice, च - and, स्वाध्यायः - study of Sastras, तपः - austerity, आर्जवम् - straightforwardness.

The Blessed Lord Said :

1. Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga ; alms-giving, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the Sastras, austerity and straightforwardness ;

As we read the opening stanza irresistably we are reminded of the twenty *values* of life that were described

earlier by Lord Krishna in His Divine discourses*. Herein we find an almost exhaustive list of the noble *traits* in a cultured man living the Hindu way-of-life; a life wherein he accepts and lives those twenty *values* of life when meeting his day-to-day world. And in the enumeration of these qualities, fearlessness (*Abhayam*) comes first. Fear is generated in one, only when one is in a field which is clouded by one's ignorance. Fear is the expression of *Avidya*. Where there is Knowledge there is fearlessness. By placing this quality of fearlessness at the head of the list, with the unsung music of sheer suggestiveness, the divine Acharya is indicating that true ethical perfection in one is directly proportional to the spiritual unfoldment attained by the individual.

Purity of heart: No amount of external discipline can supply the student the positive dynamism that is in the core of all moral living. Geeta invariably preaches a dynamic religion, militant both in its theory and practice. The great Charioteer is not satisfied by a tame generation of passive goodness, but he wants the members of the perfect Hindu society not only to live among themselves the values of the higher life, but he wants them to burst forth with the positive glow of righteousness and bathe the entire generation of man with the light of truth and virtue—virtue here implies the honesty of intentions and the purity of motives.

Steadfastness in the devotion to knowledge: This ethical purity at the level of the heart can be brought about not when the human mind is turned outward on to the flesh. Only when the mind is constantly held up in unison with the Infinite Song of the Soul, can it discover in itself the neces-

* Chapter 13 : Stanzas 7-11.

sary courage to renounce its low appetites, clinging attachments and the consequent foul motives gurgling from within itself. Devotion to Knowledge (*Gyana Yoga*) is thus the positive way to persuade the mind to leave all its low temptations. When a child is playing with a delicate glass curio, to save the precious object, the parents generally offer him a piece of chocolate, and the little child, anxious to get the chocolate puts the precious thing down. Similarly, a mind that is awakened to the serener joys of the Self will naturally never cling on to the sensuous objects and their filthy joys.

Charity, Restraint of the Senses, and Sacrifice : These three are now the techniques by which an individual successfully tunes up his inner instruments of knowledge in order to discover the required amount of "steady devotion to knowledge". Charity must come from one's own sense of abundance. Charity springs only from a sense of oneness in us—oneness between the giver and the recipient. Unless one is able to identify oneself with others, one will not feel this noble urge to share what all one has with others, who have not got them. Thus *Dana* is a capacity to restrain one's instinct of acquisition and aggrandisement, and to replace them with the spirit of sacrifice, and it is mainly employed in sharing the objects of the world that one possesses*.

If charity (*dana*) develops in one the capacity to detach oneself from the wealth that one possesses and share it with

* This does not mean that we are to exclude charity at the level of heart and head. In fact to share with others our sympathy and kindness and to distribute one's knowledge are considered by our Smrithis as great charities (*Vidya dana* etc.)

others who are poorer, then we can say control of sense-organs (*dama*) is the application of the same spirit of sacrifice in one's personal life. To give complete licence for the sense organs to indulge is to waste unproductively the total human vitality. To economise the wastage of energy through the sense organs in the field of sense-objects is to discover an extra amount of untapped energy within ourselves. This energy can be made use of as the motive power behind the mind-and-intellect that is set on flight to the higher realms in meditation. To keep the mind tuned up to the Self, a subtle energy is called forth, and it will be discovered within ourselves when we control our sense indulgence. Without *dama* and *dana* the pilgrimage to Truth is merely a dream.

Sacrifice (*Yagna*) : In the Vedic period *yagna* was the day-to-day devotional ritualism that the average man of spiritual seeking diligently practised. Without this regular prayer-cum-pooja—which is the substitute for *yagna* available for us now—control of the sense-organs will be impossible, without which the spirit of charity cannot come, and in the absence of both *dana* and *dama* spiritual experience of the Self, the recognition of the Divine within us, is impossible. It is interesting to note that each subsequent term in this list is logically connected with the item indicated immediately previous to it.

Study of the Scriptures : (*Swadhyaya*) : Traditionally this term indicates regular study of the scriptures. Study of spiritual literature daily in measured quantities will provide the necessary inspiration to live the divine life in our day-to-day existence. But the scriptural study is indicated here by a very significant term*. In its pregnant Sanskrit

* Swadhyaya = Swa + Adhyayana — Self-Study.

import, it suggests that the study of the scriptures should not be merely an intellectual appreciation, but as the student reads the text books. he must be able to simultaneously observe, analyse and read the truth of what he is studying within his own life. Regular studies coupled with regular practice (*yagna*) would give us the courage to live in self-control of the sense-organs, which in its turn can supply us with the steadiness in meditation for realizing the Highest.

Asceticism (*Tapas*) : All conscious self-denials at the body level, whereby an individual reduces his indulgence in the world outside and comes to gain more and more energy within himself and applies the new-found energy for the purpose of self-development, are called *Tapas*.

Uprightness (*Arjavam*) : Crookedness in thoughts, emotions and general conduct has a self-destructive influence upon our personality. Actions belying one's own true intentions and motives, convictions and aspirations, realizations and discriminations would result in the crookedness of one's personality. He who is indulging in this way-of-life would develop thereby in himself a split personality and will soon become empty of the glow of effectiveness and impoverished in the powers of the personal grit as an individual.

In short, in this very opening stanza of the chapter, while enumerating the qualities of a "Divinely Good" man, we find an irresistible sense of scientific connection between each of the enumerated items. Ethical values and moral beauties described in Hinduism are not arbitrary declarations of an imaginative Saint or a melancholy prophet. They are built the rocky foundations of reason and experience. Sincerely pursued and consciously lived, they contribute to the better expressions of the diviner possibilities

that lie, generally dormant, in man. Ethics in India is not a mere passport to heaven, but it is a preparation for a fuller unfoldment of the divine contents in the bosom of man.

Moreover :

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥२॥

2. *ahimsa satyam acrodhas*
tyagah santir apaisnam
daya bhutesv aloluptvam
mardavam hrir akapalam

अहिंसा- Harmlessness, सत्यम् - truth, अक्रोधः - absence of anger, त्यागः - renunciation, शान्तिः - peacefulness, अपैशुनम्-absence of crookedness, दया -compassion, भूतेषु-beings, अलोलुप्त्वम्-uncovetousness, मार्दवम्-gentleness, ह्रीः -modesty, अचापलम्-absence of fickleness.

2. Harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness ;

Continuing, Lord Krishna enumerates the mental contents of the Godly type of men.

Harmlessness (*Ahimsa*): It is not so much causing to physical injury in the physical world as not harming any living creature in the world around from the realm of thought. Physical *ahimsa* is simply impossible. To continue living, some kind of harm or other has to be brought about ; it is

unavoidable. But even while bringing about unavoidable disturbances around ourselves, if our motives are pure and clean, the harm so wrought about is not an injury.

Truth (*Satyam*) : we have already discussed almost the same thing while explaining the last term in the previous stanza “uprightness”.

An even temper (*Akrodha*) : Sometimes it is rendered as ‘angerlessness’ which is not very happy. A better rendering would be ‘the capacity to check up, at the right time, waves of anger as they mount up in our bosom’ so that we do not manifest anger in our actions. It will be almost unnatural to say that the mind must become incapable of anger. But no emotion should be allowed to overwhelm us to such a degree as we are rendered almost impotent by it. This anger arises out of an insufferable impatience with others*. In short, *Akrodha* does not mean ‘without anger’ but only ‘keeping as far as possible an even temper’.

Spirit of renunciation (*Tyaga*) : In this stanza also we find as we did notice in the previous stanza, that there is a sequential order strictly followed in the development of thought from term to term. If, without respect to truth, we cannot live in the spirit of *ahimsa*, so also without the spirit of renunciation an even temper is but an exaggerated hope.

Quietude (*Shanti*) : If a seeker is capable of living conscious of Truth, harming none, keeping an even temper, in a spirit of renunciation in spite of all disturbing environments and happenings around, then he is the one who shall come to experience peace and quietude in himself. Even in the

*Especially when they by their thought, word and deed come to injure our interest or insult our own self evaluation of ourselves.

midst of a stormy life and outrageous circumstances, such an individual can successfully keep his inward balance and intellectual poise.

Unmalicious tongue (*Apaisunam*) . The ugliness or beauty of the tongue is ordered by the personality behind it. A shattered entity will seek a self-gratification in malicious scandal-mongering, and the soft fleshy tongue can often become more powerful than the most destructive missiles. A seeker who is trying to reach a fuller and more exhaustive self-expression should develop such an inward harmony that his speech should echo the fragrance of his soul. A speech with softness of tone, clarity of expression, honesty of conviction, power of bringing a clear picture in the listener's mind with no veiled meaning, overflowing with sincerity, devotion and love, becomes the autobiography of the personality that speaks. To develop, therefore, such a habit of speech would be unconsciously training many aspects in ourselves which are all necessary for perfect disciplining of the inner equipments.

Tenderness towards beings : In a society of living creatures, it is not fair for a seeker to expect that all should keep up to the ideal that he entertains himself. There will be imperfections around. But to recognise in and through those imperfections the Infinite beauty of life expressed is the secret of enduring tenderness in all Saints and Sages. Love alone can discover infinite amount of tenderness in us. Unless we train ourselves to see the beauty of life pulsating through even wretched hearts and ugly characters, we will fail to bring forth our tenderness to sweeten life within and without.

Uncovetousness (*Aloluptvam*) : In the subjective life, to live "without covetousness" means controlling our sense

organs from extreme indulgence in sense enjoyments. An average man has got an endless thirst and an unsatiable hunger for some indulgence. To remain in self-control without endless sense-hunger is meant herein by the term uncovetousness.

Gentleness and modesty : They are not so much the particular disciplines of the individual as the resultant beauty and harmony which an individual brings forth as the fragrance of his culture in his contacts with the world outside. These two qualities are best seen in one who has trained himself in all the above-mentioned noble qualities. The conduct of such self-disciplined man will be both gentle and modest.

Not unnecessarily moving the limbs (*Achalam*) : Restlessness of the mind and unsteadiness of character are reflected in the physical movements of an intelligent being, The body shadows the condition of the mind. A constant restlessness, sudden outbursts of activity, immodest shakings of the body, voluptuous tossings of the limbs are all noticed only in individuals who have not yet cultivated a steady character and a purposeful personality. These can be seen in a child and in it they are even considered to go to add its beauty. But as an individual grows, the beauty in him is in his mastery over himself as declared by his movements.

Sankara explains this as “ not to speak or move hands and legs in vain ”. This is an extension of the meaning of this very term, and thereby implies also promptitude and economy of physical energy in any efficient activity. Unnecessarily exhausting the muscles with indecisive movements and thoughtless exertions are signs of weakness in the personality. Such individuals are extremely imaginative and miserably weak in their intellectual calibre and emotional vitality. To

avoid them, therefore, is to cure many simple weaknesses at the various facets of any given personality.

Moreover :

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति संपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥

3. *tejah ksama dhrtih saucam*

adroho na timanita

bhavanti sampadam daivim

abhijatasya bharata

तेजः –Vigour, क्षमा – forgiveness, धृतिः –fortitude, शौचम्–purity, अद्रोहः –absence of hatred, न–not, अतिमानिता–over pride, भवन्ति–belong, सम्पदम्–estate, दैवीम्–Divine, अभिजातस्य–of the born, भारत–O Bharata.

3. Vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride—these belong to the one born for the Divine Estate, O Bharata.

Panting to paint vividly the nature of the heart of a man of Divine State, Lord Krishna lists with minimum strokes the mental attitude, the intellectual calibre and the spiritual glow in all men of divine temperament.

Brilliant Glow : (*Teja :*) This is not a mere physical complexion produced by over eating and ample rest. It is not just an exterior beauty arising out of careful tending of the physical structure and planned nourishing of the pads of flesh around the sage. The glow of spirituality is not literally a painted glow around his head glimmering as a ring

of fire. The brilliancy of his intellect, the twinkling joy in his eyes, the thrilling fragrance of peace around, the serene measure of quiet in his activities, the dalliance of his love for all, the light of joy that ever gurgles out from the innermost depths of his being—these constitute the irresistible attraction of the personality of the sage who with abundant energy serves all and discovers for himself a fulfilment in that service.

Patience ; (*Kshama*) : The context in which the word is used here should increase the depth of its meaning. It is not merely a “capacity to patiently live through some of the minor physical or mental inconvenience” but the term ‘patience’ here indicates “unaffectedness”, when insulted or injured by others. In its actual working, it is a subtle boldness that comes to a man in facing his world around with an unruffled serenity even in the face of the most powerful oppositions and equally provoking situations.

Fortitude : (*Dhriti*) : When an individual daringly meets life he cannot expect all the time happy situations, favourable circumstances and conducive arrangement of chances in his field of activity. Ordinarily a weak man feels suddenly dejected and he is tempted to leave his present field of work when it is only half done. Thereby many lose their chances of achieving the highest and come to desert the field of action almost the moment when Victory was hastening towards them with a garland of success ! In order to stick to our guns, man needs a secret energy to nurture and nourish his exhausted and fatigued mental and intellectual morale, and this sacred energy welling up in one’s own well-integrated personality is ‘fortitude’. The strength of faith, conviction of the goal, consistency of purpose, vivid perception of the ideal and a bold spirit of sacrifice cultivated diligently—all these form the source from which forti-

tude trickles down to remove exhaustion, fatigue, despair and what not.

Purity : (*Saucham*) : The word indicates not only the inner purity—purity of thoughts and motives—but it also suggests, the purity of environments, cleanliness of habit and personal belongings. As a result of an over-emphasis of the subjective purity, we find to-day in our society an utter neglect of the external purity. Clean clothes, civic habits have both become rare in our society. Even the devotee-class is not generally very careful about these, although our religion emphasizes that purity and cleanliness are unavoidable disciplines for a seeker.

Non-Hatred (*Adroha*) : If the earlier idea of ‘harmlessness’ (*ahimsa*) was a virtue explained in the previous stanza, here the same virtue is repeated not only for the purpose of emphasis but also to indicate a slightly different shade of meaning. The term here should mean not only “absence of hatred” but “absence of even a vague desire to injure any living creature”. Just as an individual will never have, even in his dream, any idea of injuring himself, a true seeker, in his recognition of the Oneness in life, must come to feel that to injure anyone is to injure himself.

Absence of over-pride (*Na-athi-manitha*) : To leave off one’s exaggerated notions of high self-honour is to immediately relieve ourselves from thousands of avoidable excitements and responsibilities. Life becomes a holiday to one who has renounced his over-exaggerated pride, while to a Coriolanus life becomes a heavy cross, to be carried patiently, as it mercilessly cuts through the living flesh on his shoulders,

The above-described twenty-six qualities give us a complete picture of the nature of a man of ‘Divine Estate’

These qualities are enumerated to serve as a living guide to all those who thirst to become perfect. To the extent we are able to recognise our way of life and change our vision of the world around us on the above lines, to that extent we shall economise our energies, that is often wasted in idle pursuits. To respect and live these twenty-six values of life completely is to assure ourselves of a right way of living.

Here follows a description of the demoniac (Asuric) nature :

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।

अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ संपदमासुरीम् ॥४॥

4. *dambho darpo timanas ca
krodah parusyam eva ka
ajnanam ca bhijatasya
partha sampadam asurim*

दम्भः - Hypocrisy, दर्पः - arrogance, अभिमानः - self-conceit, च-and, क्रोधः -wrath, पारुष्यम्-harshness, एव-even, च-and, अज्ञानम्-ignorance, च-and, अभिजातस्य-of the born, पार्थः -O Partha, सम्पदम्-estate, आसुरीम्-demoniacal.

4. Hypocrisy, arrogance and self-conceit, anger and also harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born, O Partha, for a Demonaic Estate.

The dark features of the ugly personalities in the world were never before so strikingly brought within the embrace of a simple stanza as it is done here. All the Satanic forces that can ever come to express in the bosom of a man have been brought under some all-comprehensive 'types' of devi-

lishness as indicated in the enumeration hereunder. To know them would be a sufficient warning of what we must avoid and what all traits in us we must carefully weed out from our mental composition so that the greater energy that is available for well-developed man, may without any obstruction flow out of our bosom.

Ostentation (*Dambha*) : ‘Pretending to be righteous but living unrighteous ways of life’ is the meaning that Shankara gives to this term. Hypocrisy is certainly one of the cheapest poses diligently pursued by the vicious. To them all their superficial glow of goodness and purity, of religiosity and sincerity are attractive hoods to cover their deadly motives and ugly intentions.

Arrogance (*Darpa*) : Endless pride of learning, or of wealth, or of social status, or of family connections, gives to an individual a kind of insufferable uppishness, and he comes to look at the world and the happenings around him through this misinterpreting and self-deluding medium and lives in a world of imagined self-importance resulting in an arrogance that drives away all inward peace. Such an individual gets himself self-exiled from the love of the community around. An arrogant man is a lonely creature in the world and his only companions are his own imagined self-importance and dreams of his own glories which none but he alone can see. And naturally he becomes highly self-conceited (*abhimān*).

Anger (*Krodha*) : When such a self-conceited, arrogant, hypocrite looks at the world around him and finds that the world’s estimate of him is totally different from his own estimate of himself, he revolts within and hence his wrath (*Krodha*) at everything around him. And once such an individual comes to boil within in anger, in his speech and action there must necessarily be a disconcerting insolence (*Parushya*).

All these above-mentioned qualities—hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, wrath and insolence—arise from his own self delusions (*ajnanam*), He knows not himself: he is ignorant of the scheme of the world around him: he is blind to the right relationship that he should maintain with the world about him. In short, he is extremely ego-centric and he expects the world to be what he wants it to be, and in his delusion he supplies a mad blue-print prescribing how the world of healthy beings are to behave and act in *his* field of actions. This ignorance of oneself and one's own relation with the things and beings around is the secret cause that generally forces one to revolt against the environments and act quixotically.

such people are termed here by Krishna as the 'Diabolically Fallen', the *Asuric*. Such a sudden and spectacular contrast is provided by the picture of the *Asuric*, as given here brings out gloriously the earlier picture of the 'Divinely Good'—the *Daivic* Good—in relief.

The effects of the two natures—the Divinely Good and the Diabolically Fallen—are spoken of as follows :

दैवी संपद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।

मा शुचः संपदं दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥५॥

5. *daivi sampad vimoksaya*
nibandhaya suri mata
ma sucah sampadam daivim
abhiyata si pandava

दैवी-Divine, सम्पत्-estate, विमोक्षाय-for liberation, निबन्धाय-for bondage, आसुरी-the demoniacal, मता-is deemed, मा-not, शुचः-grieve, सम्पदम्-

state, दैवीम्—the divine, अभिजातः—born for, असि—
you, are, पाण्डव—O Pandava.

5. The divine nature is deemed for liberation, the
demoniacal for bondage ; grieve not, O Pandava,
you are born with divine qualities.

On hearing such an exhaustive enumeration of the qualities in the good and the bad hearts, it will be natural for every sincere student of Geeta to feel subjectively a despair not knowing whether he belongs to the latter or the former category. Generally one would find it easier to mistake oneself to be bad than to feel the confidence that one belongs to the good. Arjuna should have felt the same despair and, perhaps, knowing this from his face, Krishna consoled him : ‘ Grieve not, O, Pandava ! You are born of the Divine Estate.’. That a seeker has interest and perseverance to read Gita up to this chapter, itself shows that he belongs to the ‘ Divinely-Good ’ category.

Both the ethical beauties and the non-ethical ugliness are painted here not for the purpose of sending the good to an eternal heaven and damn the vicious to a perpetual hell. Here the theme is taken up on a more scientific basis. Ethical virtues are intelligent ways of focussing man’s understanding and reviving his exhausted energies and fatigued spirit to live. By living these healthy values of righteous living, the individual unshackles his psychological personality from its self-made entanglements : “ *The Divine Estate leads to release* ”. As a contrast to this, the negative tendency cultivated and almost perfected by the ‘ Diabolically Fallen ’ are self-made shackles that chain a man to a realm of confusions and sorrows, forbidding him to grow into the ampler extensions of his own inward possibility : “ *the devilish to bondage.* ”

Grieve not (*Ma sucha*): To become sentimental and desperate or to exhaust oneself in self-pity or self-condemnation is a psychological malady, and one, suffering from it, can never discover in oneself the energising cheer, the sustaining confidence, and the steady will that are required for an intelligent self-diagnosis and an effective self-cure. To a seeker living the ethical values itself is a kind of treatment to cure him of some of his personality-diseases. To the Hindus a sinner is not a dangerous mental leper or a failure of the omnipotent Lord. To a Vedantin, the Satan is not an equally-powerful and a perpetual challenge to God. Good contaminated by weakness and ignorance is evil. And evil when cured of its ignorance itself becomes the good. A dim glass, covered with dust, cannot reflect the light of the world and truly show the objects in front of it. This is not because the glass has lost its light within, but its reflectivity has got veiled at present by the accumulated dust, which is essentially something other than the glass. To wipe it off clean is to bring forth from it more clarity and light for the reflections. A 'Diabolically Fallen' has also the same Infinite Light of pure wisdom—but alas, extremely dimmed by its own false values and wrong concepts.

Taking up the 'Diabolically Fallen', Krishna scientifically analyses the mental contents, and they are separately observed and studied in the following stanzas :

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।

दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ॥६॥

6. *dvau bhutasaragau loke smin*
daiva asura eva ca
daivo vistarasah prokta
asuram partha me srnu

द्वौ-Two, भूतसर्गौ-types of beings, लोके - in world, अस्मिन्-(in) this, दैवः -the divine, आसुर-
demoniacal, एव-even, च-and, दैवः -the divine, विस्त-
रशः -at length, प्रोक्तः -has been described, आसुरम्
-demoniacal, पार्थ-O Partha, मे-from Me, शृणु-
hear.

6. There are two types of beings in this world, the
divine and the demoniacal; the divine has been
described at length; hear from Me, O Partha,
of the demoniacal,

According to Krishna the entire creation falls under two categories: the 'Divinely Good' and the 'Diabolically Fallen'. But in fact, there is yet another group, 'Incorrigibly Indifferent' (*Rakshasic*) about whom the lord is serenely silent. This silence regarding them is perhaps more eloquent than all his eloquence regarding the other two groups. Religion and techniques of self-development are addressed only to the former two groups and not to the *Rakshasic* type of men. They have not yet in their inward nature sufficiently grown up in their evolution; they are still in the hands of the moulding-Nature and they have yet to be properly baked in the furnace-of-life and its scorching experiences. As they grow up sufficiently, they come under the category of the 'Diabolically Fallen' and religion can come forward to lift them up to the status of the 'Divinely Good'. There onwards Religion can show them the way to experience and realise the Absolute Goodness which is the Eternal Reality.

If all about the *Asura* type was given a broad sketch earlier,* the details are being filled in elaborately in the following stanzas.

In almost all religious text books of the world, we do read the positive qualities of goodness and righteousness being glorified. But rarely they paint exhaustively the negative tendencies of a devilish personality. Some critics of Hinduism are jubilant in discovering this tendency in our scriptural texts as a great weakness in our prophets and seers. This criticism against Hinduism was levelled mainly by the critics of the nineteenth century. They are very silent nowadays because they have been given the lie by the results of the twentieth century psychological researches and the success in some of the psychiatric methods. To become poignantly aware of the negative tendencies in one's own personality structure and to become consciously disgusted with those vulgar urges are ways of easily eradicating such wrong tendencies from one's own inner nature. Be aware of weakness; it volatilizes readily from our character—says the modern psychiatrist.

The bad is not merely a simple opposite of the good. It can never be that the good has certain urges and the bad some other types of urges; neither of these is the exclusive of the other. Human urges are always typical, and both the good and the bad are expressions of man's heart. Bad is only good misconstrued. Therefore, in the enumeration of the qualities of the bad, we do not have to meet with a sapless list of opposites to the previous enumerations which painted the good. As we discover the contents of the bad mind, we shall discover that they are all the very same in contents as that of the good, but misapplied under a wrong enthusiasm created as a result of some avoidable false evaluations. Virtue, poisoned with ignorance, is evil;

*Chapter XVI—Sloka 4.

evil treated and cured of its poison, when it regains its health, becomes virtue.

The men of *Asuric* nature know not either action or inaction.* Here 'action' means any intelligent piece of work undertaken and pursued with a right motive and intention, so as to gain for ourselves a better inward satisfaction.

Religious acts, selfless work, dedicated service are all examples of right actions, whereby the individual gains not only an immediate profit, but also ultimate inward heightening of culture. The 'inaction' here means forbidding ourselves from striving in right channels, and it can bring about only restlessness for ourselves and unrest for others. The list enumerating the negative tendencies of the fallen starts with the idea of ignorance. This is very significant. If any one does a crime in ignorance, though justice may not accept it as an excuse, the heart of the society will readily discover a tender forgiveness for the erring soul.

Thus in the very first stanza which is to paint the Asuric type opens as it were with an apology for the 'Diabolically Fallen' along with a powerful suggestion eliciting our most tender kindness towards them.

*The terms "pravritti" and "nivritti" used here have been differently interpreted by different commentators: (a) they are taken in their technical sense of 'the coming forth' and the 'return' of the manifested world and then the rendering becomes 'neither creation nor its end'; (b) others take 'action' to mean 'the pursuance of religious and moral objects by a course of work' and 'inaction', the pursuance of the same ends by ascetic withdrawal from the works of the world—sanyasa'.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।

न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥७॥

7. *pravrttim ca nivrttim ca
jana na vidur asurah
na saucam na pi ca caro
na satyam tesu vidyate*

प्रवृत्तिम्—Action, च—and, निवृत्तिम्—inaction, च—and, जना—men, न—not, विदुः—know, आसुरा—the demoniac, न—not, शौचम्—purity, न—not, अपि—also, च—and, आचारः—right conduct, न—not, सत्यम्—truth, तेषु—in them, विद्यते—is.

7. The demoniac know not what to do and what to refrain from ; neither purity, nor right conduct, nor truth is found in them.

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।

अपरस्परसंभूतं किमन्यत्कामहैतुकम् ॥८॥

8. *asatyam apratistham te
jagad ahur anisvaram
aparasparasambhutam
kim anyath kamahaitukam*

असत्यम् – Without Truth, अप्रतिष्ठम् – without (moral) basis, ते—they, जगत्—the world, आहुः –say, अनीश्वरम्—without a God, अपरस्परसंभूतम्—brought about by mutual union, किम्—what, अन्यत्—else, कामहैतुकम्—with lust for its cause.

8. They say, "The universe is without truth, without (moral) basis, without a God, brought about by mutual union, with lust for its cause ; what else ?"

Neither is purity found in them : The outer cleanliness is to a large measure a reflection of the inward condition. A disciplined man with education and culture alone can in fact maintain a systematic order and cleanliness around him.

One who is incapable of deciding the actions to be pursued as well as avoided has no harmony within, and therefore, there is no inward purity or outward cleanliness (*soucha*) for such an individual. If the mind is indisciplined, since outward behaviours are nothing but the expressions of the mind, there cannot be a decent and well-behaved life outside. Therefore, Krishna indicates that in them good conduct is conspicuous by its absence.

He who is confused of 'action and inaction', who has no purity or external cleanliness, who fails in good conduct, cannot maintain *truthfulness* in his words. All through, if you very carefully read these terms in the spirit in which the divine charioteer had given them out you will find a divine tenderness in the Lord for such 'Diabolically-Fallen' folks. There is no Christian revengefulness on the sinner anywhere to be seen in the entire length of the Geeta. It is a logical conclusion that such a man must necessarily be untruthful in words, not because he is deliberately pursuing dishonesty, but he is incapacitated, in his temperament to be honest.

Moreover :

In the description of the 'Diabolically Fallen' we recognise the picture of a sceptical, utter materialist, who looks at life from his own limited intellectual standpoint and who na-

turally fails to recognise any final purpose or permanent substratum for this seemingly confusing array of illogical happenings. Such materialists have stalwart intellects and are capable of original and independent thinking. Only they have to be a wee-bit trained to see something beyond what their general observation and analysis can discover for them. The materialist view-point of life and the world are explained in the stanza.

Without Truth (*Asatyam*): Even when they are very scientific in their observation and analysis, the materialists fail to recognise the Truth that upholds the Universe. They recognise change, and the constant flow of change itself is accepted by them as the world, without having for it any steady and changeless substratum! At the same time scientists admit that the change is relative and without a changeless constant foundation change cannot take place and give us the impression of continuity. Without a screen, steady and motionless, a running film cannot be projected; without a constant bend the waters of the rivers cannot flow continuously. The ever-changing universe cannot give us the *appearance* of a constant change without it having a steady and changeless 'foundation', the Ground. This eternal and unchanging Reality behind the ever-changing flux of things is called the Truth. According to the materialist the Universe is without Truth (*Asatyam*).

Without a lord (*An-Eswaram*): If there is no substratum at least is there then a commanding intelligence that orders, regulates, determines and generally guides the happenings in the world? According to the materialist there is no such Director of Events, no Architect of Happenings. There is no creator, no sustainer.

By mutual union : The entire universe of beings and things is formed only as a result of mutual combinations of the great elements and the sole ruling factor that determines creation is 'chance' and the only deciding urge, propelled by which the beings are born is nothing but 'lust'. Even modern psychologists shamelessly insist that the sex urge alone is the mother urge because of which everything is happening, every achievement is gained and every profit is made everywhere in life.

After describing thus, the point of view of the pure materialist, Krishna associates this unphilosophical, illogical illusion with a spring board of life for all the 'Diabolically-Fallen' type of humanity.

एतां दृष्टिमवष्टभ्य नष्टात्मनोऽल्पबुद्धयः ।

प्रभवन्त्युग्रकर्माणिः क्षयाय जगतोऽहिताः ॥९॥

9. *etam drstim avastbhya
nastatmano lpabuddhayah
prabhavanty ugrakarmanah
ksayaya jagato hitah*

एताम्-This, दृष्टिम्-view, अवष्टभ्य-holding, नष्टा-
त्मानः-ruined souls, अल्पबुद्धयः-of small intellect,
प्रभवन्ति-come forth, उग्रकर्माणिः - of fierce deeds,
क्षयाय-for (its) destruction, जगत्-of the world,
अहिताः -enemies.

9. Holding this view, these ruined souls of small intellect and fierce deeds, come forth as the enemies of the world for its destruction.

Holding this view : Holding this view as described in the previous stanza that the world has no substratum, that

there is no controlling power, and that the world continues to exist and procreates by itself, if a society were to live a life, giving full vent to their animal nature, all its achievements are but restlessness and strife, disaster and destruction for itself.

Ruined souls : The balanced personality can be only for that individual who has to begin with a clear conception and a correct judgment of himself. Whenever an individual has forgotten himself, he generally comes to act below the dignity of his birth, education, culture and social status ; a mad man and a drunken fool are just two specimens to cite here. When the materialist thus works in ignorance of his own divine status, he naturally, behaves as though he is an animal—insulting his own divinity and status of his own evolution.

Of small intellect (*Alpa Budhayah*) : Once an individual refuses to recognise any “ Divine Presence of Truth,” embracing and underlying life, he will thereafter function in life as a self-centered, selfish entity, striving endlessly to eke out his own personal satisfactions from the material world. Seeking in the gratification of his sensual urges a complete fulfilment, he strives hard and yet discovers only a carping disappointment, a burning hunger, a sense of defeat in life. Naturally Krishna sympathises with such men and calls them ‘ men of small intellect ’.

Fierce Deeds : “ If the materialist wants to believe in no Eternal Reality, and if others have to believe in some Permanent Truth, why not allow equal freedom for the both—the believers and non-believers ?”, would be a natural question that will arise in any man of discriminate intellect, if he is truly democratic and tolerant in his point of view. Anticipating such a doubt in a sincere student, Krishna is showing

in the second line of the stanza that when an individual loses his faith in the higher Reality he becomes licentious at all levels of his expression, and, prompted by his selfish urges to seek and discover his fulfilment in life, he would ultimately, bring about, perhaps, even irrecoverable disasters to his era. Historically the world is to-day going through the same predicament as declared and anticipated by the Geeta.

Materialists, who do not recognise the Truth that pulsates through life's happenings seeking Its expression, will unconsciously bring about such a discordant note of disharmony in the community as they upset the balance and plunge the world into a bloody mire of disastrous wars.

The view point of life of a materialist and the motives in his everyday life, are beautifully described in the following stanzas.

काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं दम्भमानमदान्विताः ।

मोहाद्गृहीत्वासद्ग्रहान्प्रवर्तन्तेऽशुचित्रताः ॥१०॥

10. *kamam asritya duspuram*
Dambhamanamadanvitah
mohad grahitva sadgrahan
pravartante sucivratah

कामम्-Desire, आश्रित्य-abiding in, दुष्पूरम्-insatiable, दम्भमानमदान्विताः -full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, मोहात् -through delusion, गृहीत्वा-having held, असद्ग्रहान्-evil ideas, प्रवर्तन्ते-they work, अशुचित्रताः -with impure resolves.

10. Filled with insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding evil ideas through delusion, they work with impure resolves.

The gruesome ugliness of the inward nature in a pure materialist, as he struts about in the fields of his achievement, cannot be better expressed than in this stanza. For a more vivid and thorough depiction of the mental contents of the 'Diabolically Fallen'. for a clearer description of the quality and texture of his activities in the society, one has to go ransacking the entire existing literature of all the languages in the world, only to fail at last to find a parallel to this stanza.

Given to desire : Activities are not at all possible unless they are instigated by desires. Where desires have ended, their dynamic life, expressing itself in its achievements, is impossible. And yet, to remain as victims of desires, is to make ourselves out to be some horrid machines of activity, vomiting out into the world our inner poison of ego and ego-centric passions. To sustain life from the platform of desires is unintelligent ; for, they have a knack of multiplying themselves as we go on satisfying one after one. They are 'hard to appease'. Filled with unsatiable desires, when a man invests his intelligence and reason, abilities and knowledge, in order to fulfil his desires, he should, naturally, bring about an endless stream of disturbances in and around him.

Full of hypocrisy, conceit and arrogance : Desire is but an expression of ego, when the seeker seeks a permanent satisfaction and infinite fulfilment through sense enjoyments. When an individual is thus deluded, in the misconception of his ego-vanity, negative tendencies such as hypocrisy, conceit and arrogance should naturally rise up, and smothered by them, the individual sleeplessly strives to satisfy the unending demands of his own unbridled desires.

Victims of delusion : Desire cannot come to the all-fulfilled*. Desire can come only to one who mysteriously fails to

feel his Infinitude and expresses himself a limited ego (*Jiva*). Forgetting one's own divine nature, in one's identification with the unreal things and values of life, one develops in oneself the hunger to enjoy peace and happiness. Naturally, numerous desires pox his life, and seeking fulfilment of all the desires, he indulges in a senseless gratification.

They act with unclean resolve : The mental biography of the ' Diabolically Fallen ' (*Aswa*) is complete in its sequence when the stanza says that the ego desperately struggling to gain its inward peace, must necessarily throw away all considerations for the others, ignore all the noble values of life, and enter into the fields of activity shamelessly intolerant, inconsiderate and even brutal. Drunk with passions, opiated with his own desires, he works in the world as a maniac, hurling blood and acid, death and disaster at all around him in his community.

This picture viewed microcosmically, paints the materialist to build up his life upon the restless waves of his desire-tossed mind. The same word-painting, when looked at microcosmically, portrays vividly the ugliness of the materialistic communities and nations. Life's beauty depends upon the beauty of the philosophy upon which the life is built. If the foundations are false, the edifice however strongly built, will prove to be in no way better than a card-castle. The economic break-up, the social evils, the political upheavals, and general restlessness, that are found all round the world are all thoroughly discussed in this stanza, if only we know how to read it.

*"Apta kamasya ka spriha" : To the all-fulfilled, how can there be desire-prompted attachments?—Mandukya Karika.

It is also interesting to note how Krishna, while explaining the 'Diabolically Fallen' (*Asuras*) without directly saying so, is painting the picture of a materialist, who by nature, is an atheist in thought and a tireless hunter of pleasure in action. In this stage of materialism, do we prove ourselves faithful to the type just now discussed ?

Painting the concept of life in a confirmed materialist, Krishna continues :

चिन्तामपरिमेयां च प्रलयान्तामुपाश्रिताः ।

कामोपभोगपरमा एतावदिति निश्चिताः ॥११॥

11. *cintam aparimeyam ca
pralayantham upasrtah
kamopabhogaparama
etavad iti niscitah*

चिन्ताम्-Cares, अपरिमेयाम्-unmeasurable, च-and, प्रलयान्ताम्-ending only with death, उपाश्रिताः-refuged in, कामोपभोगपरमाः-regarding gratification of lust as their highest aim, एतावत्-that is all, इति-thus, निश्चिताः-feeling sure.

11. Giving themselves over to unmeasurable cares ending only with death, regarding gratification of lust as their highest aim, and feeling sure that that is all.

Endless cares: Wedded to anxiety and care, such desperate men drag their life of futile endeavours along the corridors of sobs and sorrows to the silent court-yard of death ! In an ordinary life, cares besiege the citadel of peace and joy, especially when hosts of powerful desires conquer the

individuals. The struggles in acquiring and anxieties in preserving the acquired objects of desire are the content of all cares in life. To waste an entire life-time in such anxieties and to realise in the end only how miserable he had failed, is indeed a telling tragedy.

“Satisfaction of lust as the highest”: (*Kama-upabhoga-parama*) : Consistent effort either in the field of the good or in the field of the vicious is impossible without a philosophy of life that sustains the continuity of individual’s activities.

The philosophy of life that is silently accepted by the ‘Diabolically fallen’ is invariably the same wherever he be. The philosophy of the atheists* has been hinted at herein. To them satisfaction of their lusty nature is all that is the goal of life and their is nothing beyond it.

Assured that is all: Generally such materialists are no fools ; they have certainly an ample share of a rough and ready intellect. They do realise that a life dedicated to an endless hunt after sense-gratifications is a tragic way of living and that in such a scheme of existence, the individual is called upon to pay an exorbitant price for relatively insignificant gains. And yet, they continue a life, seeking satisfactions for their uncontrolled lust. If you enquire them, their answer is that the whole life is nothing but a series of such strifes. They know not of any life, the contents of which are

* The atheistic philosophy of Charvakas is summarised in their Darsana as:

“Yavad jeevat sukham jeevat ; Rinam krithva gritham
pibheth ; BaSmeebuthasya dehasya punar agamanam
kuthah :”

Bṛhaspathi Sutra declares that desire is the supreme end of man :
“kama-eka-eva-purushartha.”

peace and joy. They are generally pessimistic in life and since they scrupulously avoid serious thinking about life, they invariably come to express suicidal tendencies and often homicidal temperaments. According to them sorrows and cares alone constitute the fabric of life. They fail to discover any harmony or rhythm underlying the superficial disturbances of life. Entertaining no hope, either for themselves or for the world, they grow to become embittered hearts revengefully meeting the happenings around them and the world. In unproductive exertions, they come to lay waste their powers only to die a miserable death : exhausted, wearied, disappointed.

When the above is the philosophy of the individual, the expression of it through him is described in the following stanza :

आशापाशशतैर्वद्धाः कामक्रोधपराधणाः ।

ईहन्तेकामभोगार्थमन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥१२॥

12. *Asapasasatair baddah
kamakrodhaparayanah
ihante kamabhogartham
anyayena rathasamcayan*

आशापाशशतैः - By a hundred ties of hope, वद्धाः - bound, कामक्रोधपरायणाः - given over to lust and anger, ईहन्ते - (they) strive (to attain), कामभोगार्थम् - for sensual enjoyment, अन्यायेन - by unlawful means, अर्थसञ्चयान् - hoards of wealth.

12, Bound by a hundred ties of hope, given over to lust and anger, they strive to obtain by unlawful means hoards wealth for sensual enjoyments.

Bound by hundreds of desire-ropes : Bringing vividly to the mind of the students the picture of such materialists in this stanza, Krishna records the activities of such an individual in life. Entangled by hundreds of desires, his mental and intellectual energies get dissipated. Such an individual becomes restless and impatient with things that happen around him, and soon loses his balance of mind—his sense of judgment. Irritated and constantly unhappy with himself and his environments, such a man is seen in life '*given over to yearnings and anger*'. Where desire is throttled anger is natural. Since he is a devotee of desires, a pursuer of sense-fulfilments, and since in the world of competition often desire-fulfilments get throttled, naturally, his lust urges get prevented to become wild and passionate anger.

No doubt '*they strive*' : They tirelessly and diligently strive to satisfy their ever-increasing urges. To secure their quota of sensual enjoyments, they must necessarily acquire and procure objects of sense-satisfaction from the world without. They are not seeking happiness as such or peace as such : theirs is anxiety to satiate a nameless thirst that they are feeling—a strange hunger they are suffering from. They have not the mental equipoise to investigate into their urges, and analyse and judge them properly. Madly they strive forward to acquire and possess, and, in their desperate anxiety, to indulge and enjoy, they lose sight of all the diviner principles of existence and every noble dictate of their conscience. They strive day and night to satisfy their inexhaustible passion, with wealth acquired and hoarded by all known unjust means.

Though written some five thousand years ago, strangely enough, this portion of the description of the '*Diabolically Fallen*' reads as though a bitter, but honest criticism of our

own age. Thus if students of Geeta were to judge our brilliant era of scientific knowledge, material prosperity, secular achievements and political freedom, he will have to classify our era under this 'Diabolically Fallen' type. Amidst the bleating sirens of our booming industries, the horrid thuds of our modern missiles, the devastating powers of Nature that we have discovered and released for our own destruction, we may not give our ears to the thundering truths declared by the wisemen of such a distant past. But sincere students of the Geeta cannot but perceive the parallel and feel sad for the world and the age.

Conitnuing the Lord paints the attitude of such people to life :

इदमद्य मया लब्धमिमं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथम् ।

इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् ॥१३॥

13. *idam adya maya labdham*
imam prapasye manoratham
idam asti dam api me
bhavisyasti punar dhanam

इदम्-This, अद्य-today, मया-by me, लब्धम्-has been gained, इमम्-this, प्राप्स्ये-(I) shall obtain, मनोरथम्-desire, इदम्-this, अस्ति-is, इदम्-this, अपि-also, मे-to me, भविष्यति-shall be, पुनः -again, धनम्-wealth.

13. " This to-day has been gained by me, this desire I shall obtain, this is mine, and this wealth shall also be mine in future."

There is not much in this stanza that calls for an explanation, for the average man of the world to-day lives exactly

the life suggested in this stanza. The most successful man in competitive world is he who lives in constant consciousness of what he has already acquired, and remembers his day-to-day ambitions to acquire and possess more and more of the wealth of the world. And the laughable paradox in the philosophy of possession is that the more one has, the more one craves for. No material-wealth hunter has ever declared, "I have this much now, that will do." But on the other hand, when one has got slightly tipsy with the vanity of possessions, his shameless cry could only be : '*I have this much ; and this wealth shall also be mine.*'"

The game of desires is an endless gamble. The more one possesses the more one is tempted to strive to possess further. Each time a man strives to acquire something, his hope is that he will feel his full share of satisfaction. But invariably his experience is that he is not fully satisfied and in his disappointment, he thirsts for more and more possessions. Earlier in Geeta it was said that "he who has disciplined and controlled himself to such an extent as the world of stimuli cannot create in him even a ripple of reaction, he alone knows what peace is, and not the desirer or desires"*.

This stanza painted the materialist's attitude to and his physical relation with the things around him; The following stanza gives us his attitude towards the world :

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्मुखी ॥१४॥

14. asau maya hatah satrur
hanisye ca paran api
isvaro ham aham bhogi
siddho ham balavan sukhi

*Chapter 2—Description of the Man of Steady Wisdom—Sloka 70.

असौ-That, मया - by me, हतः - slain, शत्रुः - enemy, हनिये-(I) shall destroy, च-and, अपरान्-others, अपि-also, ईश्वरः-Lord, अहम्-I, अहम्-I, भोगी -the enjoyer, सिद्धः-perfect, अहम्-I, बलवान्-powerful, सुखी-happy.

14. "That enemy has been slain by me, and others also I shall destroy. I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful and happy."

The translation of this stanza is itself its commentary. And it is a commentary on many of our lives too ! All business-men in the world constantly chant this stanza unknown to themselves in their heart-of-hearts. "I destroyed one competitor in the market, and now I must destroy the other remaining two competitors also"... "In fact what can those poor men do to stop me from my doing what I want?"... "Because there is none equal to me in any respect. I am the Lord. I enjoy. I am the most successful man. I am strong in influence, in my capital, in my business connections and in my bank balance... And personally I am healthy..." This, in short, is the ego's song of success that is ever hummed in the heart of a true materialist. Under the spell of this Satanic lullaby, the higher instincts and the diviner urges in man go to an unenviable sleep !

What is the intellectual estimate of a materialist about himself? Listen!

आद्योऽभिजनवानस्मिकोऽन्योऽस्ति सदृशो मया ।

यक्ष्ये दास्यामि मोदिष्य इत्यज्ञान विमोहिताः ॥१५॥

15. *adyo bhijanavan asmi
ko nyo sti sadrsō mayā
yaksye dasyami modisya
ity ajnanavimohitah*

आढ्यः -Rich, अभिजनवान्-well-born, अस्मि-(I),
 कः -who, अन्यः -else, अस्ति-is, सदृशः -equal, मया-to
 me, यक्ष्ये-(I), will sacrifice, दास्यामि-(I) will give,
 मोदिष्ये-(I) will rejoice, इति-thus, अज्ञानविमोहिताः -
 deluded by ignorance.

15. "I am rich and well born. Who else is equal to
 me ? I will sacrifice, I will give (alms, money), I
 will rejoice." Thus are they deluded by igno-
 rance.

Deluded in misconceptions of himself, such a man of
 sickly bloated conceit, looks at the world through his distort-
 ing heart of vanity, and wrongly comes to judge the world
 and his relationship with it. He feels happy and even con-
 gratulates himself of his birth and breed, of his belongings
 and wealth, and he fails to find anyone who is equal to him.
 Self-exiled from society, he lives in false castles of vanity,
 suffering innumerable psychological privations. He gloats
 that he shall even order the Gods by his ritualism to save
 him—that he shall purchase the whole world with his gifts.
 And thus gloried by the world, served by the Gods, "I shall
 rejoice in the world....." are some of his maddest ravings,
 silently entertained by his restless heart in the dark depths
 of his ignorant bosom.

Summarising the three previous stanzas, it is said :

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृताः ।

प्रसक्ताः कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥१६॥

16. *anekacittavibhānta*

mohajalasamavrtah

prasakhtah kamabhogesu

patanti narake sucau

अनेकचित्तविभ्रान्ताः - Bewildered by many a fancy, मोहजालसमावृताः - entangled in the snare of delusion, प्रसक्ताः - addicted, कामभोगेषु - to the gratification of lust, पतन्ति - (they) fall, नरके - into hell, अशुचौ - foul.

16. Bewildered by many a fancy, entangled in the snare of delusion, addicted to the gratification of lust, they fall into a foul hell.

Bewildered by many imaginations : An ego-centric individual who has thus sold himself away to the sense-indulgence, when he spends his time seeking his gratification from the world of objects, his mind becomes ever-unsteady. The mind of an indulgent sensualist soon learns to empty its powers of concentration and spends itself out in its own hallucinations, fancies and imaginations.

Caught up in delusion : If the individual's mind, as a result of its false philosophy, gets dissipated in sapless dreams then his intellect also is indeed in a sad condition. His power of judgement and discrimination is caught up in a web of delusions and false values. His intellect, cut off from its permanent moorings, has thereafter no platform of its own to spring from and come to a correct judgement and evaluation of life. It fails to recognise any permanent harmony in life : it recognises only its own ego-centric vanities. Life looked at through such a disturbing equipment naturally gives a distorted version.

Addicted to sense enjoyments : When an individual's intellect is clouded, his mind gets agitated, and his sense organs, which are the vehicles through which the mind-intellect has to express itself, certainly behave erratic. When a

driver is drunk, the car cannot move properly. Naturally, therefore, an individual of the description we have had so far, at his body level, becomes a victim of lust and sense-gratifications.

Into a foul hell they fall: We need not be great philosophers to understand that such an individual, tired physically, confused mentally, upset intellectually, will live here in a self-created hell, distributing his own personality contents of woes to others around him. A man can make a heaven of the hell and a hell of the heaven by the harmony or discord in himself. A shattered subjective personality cannot find peace or fullness in any situation. Even if the environments are conducive he discovers in himself methods of upsetting them by his own inward sufferings.

If a single individual who has these false values, discovers for himself a sad world of sorrow, even in the midst of happy surroundings, we can very well understand what would be the condition of the world when a good majority of us are men, having in varying degrees the above qualities !! Hell and heaven are determined by the amount of discord or harmony that we successfully bring about in our inward make-up.

Characteristics of such people and their yagnas ?

आत्मसंभाविताः स्तब्धा धनमानमदान्विताः ।

यजन्ते नाम यज्ञैस्ते दम्भोनाविधिपूर्वकम् ॥१७॥

17. *atmasambhavitah stabdha*
dhanamanamadanvitah
yajante namavajnaish te
dambhena vidhipurvakam

आत्मसंभाविताः - Self-conceited, स्तब्धाः - stubborn, धनमानमदान्विताः - filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, यजन्ते - (they) perform, नामयज्ञैः - sacrifices in name, ते - they, दम्भेन - out of ostentation, अविधिपूर्वकम् - contrary to scriptural ordinances.

17. Self conceited, stubborn, filled with the pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices in name out of ostentation, contrary to scriptural ordinance.

Yagna need not necessarily be considered as the elaborate ritualism described in Vedas. But it can be interpreted also here in the Geeta style* as a co-operative endeavour in which each individual brings his best to pour out into the activity of life as an oblation to propitiate the potential goodness in existence, and which, when invoked, is to be distributed equally for all. This spirit of selfless effort in the service of mankind was described by Krishna as the greatest Yagna : Work is Worship.

Self-conceited, haughty, full of personal pride and intoxicated with his own possessions and wealth : An individual when he enters the field of social work or national service, he need not do so with a true *yagna*-spirit only. In spite of very many leaders and workers, striving hard for the upliftment of their country, we find that the world of our age is falling away from plenty, prosperity and peace. When a man of the “Diabolically-Fallen”-type reaches any field of activity, in spite of his vociferous claims to selfless service,

* Refer chapter 3.

he is incapable of it because of the very nature of his personality and character. Such friends of society can only at best perform a *yagna*† in name. Unconsciously their actions will be poisoned by their vanity, coloured by their sensuality, distorted by their arrogance and generally polluted by their false philosophy. As a result of all their actions, sorrow alone will prevail.

Such low men continue falling lower and lower each day :

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।

मामात्म परदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ॥१८॥

18. *ahamkaram balam darpam
kamam krdoham ca samsritah
mam atmaparadeshu
pradvisanto bhyasuyakah*

अहंकारम्—Egoism, बलम्—power, दर्पम्—haughtiness, कामम्—lust, क्रोधम्—anger, च—and, संश्रिताः—refused in, माम्—me, आत्मपरदेहेषु—in their own bodies and in those of others, प्रद्विषन्तः—hating, अभ्यसूयकाः—(these) malicious people.

18. Given over to egoism, power, haughtiness, lust and anger, these malicious people hate Me in their own bodies and those of others.

Once the ego has conquered the bosom, thereafter an individual steadily sinks into the ugliest depths of animalism. Drunk with the passions he abdicates from all the dignity of a cultured man and comes to behave as an ineffectual

† Undertake any national, social or communal work.

beast strutting about precariously on its hind legs! Such a biological freak who is physiologically a man, but temperamentally an animal, is the type that is now being discussed as the “ Diabolically Fallen ” (*Asura*).

Enumerating the inner contents of such an individual, Lord Krishna says that he is *full of egoism, brute strength, arrogance, passion and anger*. Any one of the items in this list is sufficient to pull down one to the depths of depravity and the Lord characterises the *Asura*-type of man as having all these qualities at once in him. Not only that he has got these qualities—and who has not?—but, unlike an evolver, the *Asuric* man comes to pin his faith on these qualities and he struggles to discover his fulfilment only in the expression of these tendencies.

In case an individual or individuals live these values what exactly is the harm?—this is a question that is often asked by an indulgent young man when he is advised by his elders not to live yielding readily to his low urges and ugly temptations. The Geetacharya here explains that the consequence of disrespecting all cultural values and living an uncultured ego-centric existence of passions and desires would be nothing short of total destruction of life.

A mind that is entertaining the above-mentioned attitude would come to ignore the sanctity of life, and without any compunction would rise up to strike down and desecrate it. They will grow malignant, and, in order to satisfy the low urges of egoism, would come to *hate Me in their own bodies and in those of others*. The sacred life, the Paramatman is not allowed to come out in Its full-play when It is blanketed by the low sensuous urges. Ethical values earlier described in the chapter are all disciplines of the thought-

life, whereby, a mind so tuned up, becomes the right instrument to faithfully serve the seeker of the Self. Unethical values and immoral intentions choke the great Melody of Life and make it disconcerting, purposeless noise, shattering peace and contentment within one's own and in others' bosoms.

The fall in evolution suffered by such thoughtless materialists as a result of their own false values and foul actions is being traced in the following stanzas :

तानहं द्विषतः क्रान्संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्य जस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु ॥१९॥

19. *tan aham dvisatah kruran
samsaresu naradhaman
ksipamy ajasram asubhan
asurisv eva yonisu*

तान् - Those, अहम् - I, द्विषतः - (the) hating (ones), क्रान्-cruel, संसारेषु-in the worlds, नराधमान्-worst among men, क्षिपामि-(I) hurl, अजस्रम् - for ever, अशुभान् - impure, आसुरीषु-of demons, एव-only, योनिषु=in wombs.

19. These cruel haters, worst among men in the world,
I hurl these evil-doers for ever into the womb of
the demons only.

Specimens of this 'Diabolically Fallen'-type of men are characterised, here, in a spirit of loving despair by the Lord, as *most degraded of men in this world. They are malicious and cruel*—malicious against the dignity of themselves, and

cruel to the living beings around. They are, says the Lord, *thrown by me perpetually into the wombs of demons*. Here Krishna has identified himself with the Law of Action and Reaction—wrong action leaves behind wrong tendencies and propelled by such negative tendencies the personality in an individual, after his death in this physical structure, demands an appropriate field of existence. An *assuric*-individual should necessarily discover his fulfilment only in an *assuric*-environment. Therefore the Law of Action and Reaction is to order that such cruel men of the world, again and again, reach similar wombs until the sheer weight of their experiences brings home into them a sudden realisation of the follies and futilities in following such a low tempo of life. The idea of reincarnation suggested herein has already been exhaustively discussed earlier in our discourses.*

Continuing :

आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।

मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधमां गतिम् ॥२०॥

20. *asurim yonim apanna*

mudha janmani vo kaunteya

mam aprapyai va kaunteya

tato yanty adhamam gaim

आसुरीम्-Demoniacal, योनिम्-womb, आपन्नाः - entering into, मूढाः - deluded, जन्मनि जन्मनि - in birth after birth, माम् - me, अप्राप्य - not attaining, एव - still, कौन्तेय-O Kaunteya, ततः-than that, याति-(they) fall into, अधमाम्-lower, गतिम्-condition (path or goal).

* Refer Chapter 8, Sloka 6.

20. Entering into demoniacal wombs, and deluded in birth after birth, not attaining to Me, they thus fall, O Kaunteya, into a condition still lower than that.

Tracing the line of fall of an *asura*-type of man Krishna says that an individual having repeatedly reached, as a result of his previous life the same *Asuric*-environment, life after life, fails to realise the Infinite joys of the Self. They never climb the higher heights of the cultural beauty. Slowly they sink lower and lower to reach the bottom-grades of beings and thus complete their fall.

So far we had a vivid review of two types of men : the 'Divinely Good' and the 'Diabolically Fallen'. Majority of us are in varying degrees belong to the latter class. And a spiritual seeker is never satisfied merely with the theoretical explanations and descriptions. Krishna now advises, through Arjuna, to the entire mankind how even one who has fallen so hopelessly as to reach an irredeemable Asura level, can learn to climb up and steadily progress in his spiritual evolution. None is eternally condemned, nor does one deserve a perpetual hell—it is illogical, unphilosophic and stupid.

Describing the technique of hastening one's own evolution the divine charioteer says :

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामःक्रोधस्तथालोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयंत्यजेत् ॥२१॥

21. *trividham narakasye dam
dvaram nasanam atmanah
kamah krodhas tatha lobhas
tasmad etatrayam tyajet*

त्रिविधम्—Triple, नरकस्य—of hell, इदम्—this, द्वारम्—gate, नाशनम्—destructive, आत्मनः—of the Self, कामः—lust, क्रोधः—anger, तथा—also, लोभः—greed, तस्मात्—therefore, एतत्—this, त्रयम्—three, त्यजेत्—(one) should abandon.

21. Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self—lust, anger and greed ; therefore one should abandon these three.

He indicates herein that there are three gateways to reach Hell. Earlier in a stanza in the very same chapter he described that Hell and Heaven are conditions created by the peaceful and the restless mind : they are merely subjective experiences in life, three false values entertained are the main causes.

Desire, Anger, Greed: The main theme of the entire chapter is to call man away from a life of sense-gratification into the ampler fields of desireless action and egoless perfection. Where there is desire, there anger is a natural corollary. Thoughts constantly flying from an individual towards an object of gratification is called 'desire', and when the steady flow of these thoughts of aggrandisement and possession is deflected at some barring obstacle, the refracted thoughts are called 'anger'. When disappointed in desire-gratifications a storm of revolt rises in the mind, as a consequence of which anger soars up to toss and break, wreck and sink the boat of life.

If *anger* is thus the thought-storm arising in our mind at the disappointment of a desire, greed is the erosion of our mental strength and inner peace when desires are more and more satiated. When a desire gets fulfilled, an in-

satiabie thirst for more and more joy holds the individual, and this endless appetite ruins the mental strength and saps out dry the personality-vitality in the individual. Greed is a sense of dissatisfaction constantly pursuing, poisoning the sense of satisfaction that we have already. In an undisciplined man there can be no satisfaction at any time ; even when his desires are satisfied he is still unhappy, because his appetite for enjoyment is thereby sharpened and he hungers for more ; if the desires are throttled, the disappointment brings into him an anger and he suffers the consequent wretchedness.

If the above logic of the action and the interaction between desire, anger and greed is accepted, then irresistably we are forced to accept Krishna's conclusion in this stanza :
" Therefore one should forsake these three ".

Here follows the praise of this renunciation of ego, anger and greed.

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।

आचारत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२२॥

22. *etair vimuktah kaunteya
 tamodvarais tribhir narah
 acaraty atmanah sreyaś
 tato yati param gatim*

एतैः - From this, विमुक्तः - liberated, कौन्तेय- O Kaunteya, तमोद्वारैः - gates to darkness, त्रिभिः - (by) three, नरः - the man, आचरति - practises, आत्मनः - own, श्रेयः - what is good, ततः - and then, याति - goes to, पराम् - the Supreme, गतिम् - goal.

22. A man who is liberated from these three gates to darkness, O Kaunteya, practises what is good for him and thus goes to the supreme goal.

Those who are avoiding all the three gateways to hell are complemented here. It is promised that those who avoid derailing themselves into any of these dangerous by-paths of self-exploitation and self-ruination, will steadily progress on the straight path to the destination of their life's goal. To wander into fields of desire, anger and greed is to dissipate our energies. Devoid of the divine vitality of a fully grown and well-balanced human personality, the seeker feels fatigued and not strong enough to meet the terrible challenges from within himself. To overcome the powers of the sense-objects, the mind and the intellect should re-charge the individual's inner abilities with which again the individual can strive hard and effectively make his self-expansion. Hence it is said that he who is avoiding *these three gates of darkness*—which are sure to lead him into deeper and deeper confusions and despairs and ultimately take him to the sub-human level of existence—will be, it is promised here, practising *what is good for him*.

The term 'Sreyas' has no equivalent word of the same import in the language in which we are commenting. It is not merely 'good' but it has a deeper and wider import in Sanskrit. *Sreyas*, when practised, not only brings happiness to the practitioner, but also contributes much to the well-being of the people around him.

Progressing thus in the right direction, the individual *goes to the goal supreme*. Cultural unfoldment cannot be a miraculous development overnight. It is to grow, bud out, open and bloom, under a careful nourishment of steady dis-

cipline, vigorous study and perfect understanding. The unfoldment is more delicate than that of a flower.

This stanza explains to the seeker what is to be avoided and indicates how thereby he will have a positive development and inner growth. But it is unnatural that a *positive* growth is effected as a result of a *negative* act of some denial. 'Not to eat' may be good in so far as the avoidance of over-eating, but it cannot give the positive joy of a full dinner. Similarly avoiding the dissipation of our energies through desire, anger and greed, would, perhaps, end all our agitations caused by all these three. But how can they create any positive development in ourselves? Geetha preaches a positive way-of-life; and the stanza as it stands suggests this positive outlook when it says that such an individual *practises what is good for him*.

What is the positive practice ?

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥२३॥

23. yah sastravidham utsrjya
vartate kamakaratah
na sa siddhim avapnoti
na sukham na param gatim

यः -Who, शास्त्रविधिम्-the ordinances of the scriptures, उत्सृज्य-having cast aside, वर्तते-acts, कामकारतः -under the impulse of desire, न - not, सः -he, सिद्धिम् - perfection, अवाप्नोति - attains, न - not, सुखम्-happiness, न - not, पराम् - supreme, गतिम् - goal.

23. He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, acts under the impulse of desire, attains not perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme goal.

The Divine Teacher of the Geetha explains that when the ruinous expenditure of vitality, both psychological and intellectual, is stopped and conserved, it has to be applied in the right direction. If again the energy is misused, the chances are that with a mightier bump the seeker would dash himself down to the depths of a miserable life. Ravana and such other mighty *Asuras* of the *Puranas* are typical personalities that performed fierce *tapscharya*, accumulated inward dynamism, and carried out for themselves a thorough self-destruction. So mighty was their force that they made their own generation rock, crumble and bite the dust!! To avoid such a calamity to the individual, as well as to the world around him, a severe warning must necessarily be given; and these two closing stanzas contain such advice.

Unfortunately, not realising this deeper significance, many critics have come to consider that these two closing verses are interpolations. We fail to find any justification for such a conclusion. From a psychological point of view, without these stanzas, the technical instruction on self-development, as given out in this chapter, would be incomplete and imperfect.

'He who disobeys Sastras and acts under the impulse of desire': Such a man stands to gain no result at all. Here the term *Sastra* need not necessarily be understood as a bundle of ritualistic injunctions, strictly followed and sacredly insisted upon by the fanatical orthodox. The text-books, discussing the theory of Truth (*Brahma Vidya*) and the technique of self-perfection (*Yyga*) are called *Sastras*, as a con-

trast to other subsidiary books which explain and throw light upon the *Sastra*, which are called *Prakarana* texts; these explain the categories in the science of Vedanta. Since Geeta itself is a philosophical poem, exhaustively explaining the theory and practice of God-realisation, *it is Sastra* and it is this that is meant herein by the Geethacharya.

‘*Under the impulse of desire*’: The theme developed in the previous two stanzas is, that a seeker of the higher, should of necessity renounce desire, anger and greed. We explained earlier that *anger* is a product when desire is throttled and *greed* is a logical sequence when a passionate heart gains some fulfilment of desires. Therefore, desire is the root cause. Naturally Krishna contrasts the way-of-life advocated in the Geeta with the ordinary way-of-life, in which we live, wherein the main impulsion is desire. The seekers are advised not to disobey the commands given in the Geeta *Sastra* and live instinctively under the impulse of their baser appetites and lower instincts.

‘*Attains neither joy nor success, nor goal*’: What exactly is the harm if one were not to implicitly obey the way of life advocated in the Geeta? The consequences of such an unintelligent and naughty disobedience to the right-way-of-life is clearly indicated here. Propelled by desires, coaxed by greed, torn by anger, constantly dancing to the changing fancies of the lusty flesh, an individual comes to live a life of restless agitations and tyrannical passions. Such a man cannot come to feel any happiness, attain any cultural development.

The natural conclusion therefore is :

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥२४॥

24. *tasmac chastram pramanam te
karyakaryavyavasthitau
jnatva sastravidhanoktam
karma kartum iha rhasi*

तस्मात् - Therefore, शास्त्रम् - Sastra, प्रमाणम् -(be) authority, ते - they, कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ - in determining what ought to be done or what ought not to be done, ज्ञात्वा - having known, शास्त्रविधानोक्तम् - what is said in the ordinance of the Sastras, कर्म - action, कर्तुम् - to do, इह - here (in this world), अर्हसि - shouldst.

24. Therefore, let the scriptures be thy authority, in determining what ought to be done, or what ought not to be done. Having known what is said in the ordinance of the scriptures, thou shouldst act here (in this world).

‘*Therefore*’: Because of the line of argument started in the last three stanzas, the seeker of an ampler life must necessarily follow the authority of the Scriptures in planning his way-of-life. The right conduct in life can be determined only when the individual has correct knowledge of *what is to be pursued* and *what is to be avoided*. The grand road to Truth is the same for all. It cannot be determined by each pilgrim according to his whims and fancies. *Sastras* are declared by those who had travelled the road many a time. And Rishis when they supply with a map of the road to

Perfection, we, the humble pedestrians, must pursue the path faithfully and come to bless ourselves.

‘*Having known*’: Therefore, before setting on a pilgrimage to that goal, every seeker is required to study intelligently the scriptures, which are the reports left for our guidance by those who walked successfully the path earlier. A correct knowledge and a clear intellectual vision of the goal and the direction in which it lies, and, perhaps, a little understanding of the possible difficulties *en route*—all these are unavoidable pre-requisite for a seeker.

‘*You should act here*’: Ninty per cent. of the seekers perhaps ‘know’ the Sastra exhaustively in all details as explained above, but alas, how few of them discover in themselves the courage to live, the will to pursue, and the patience to wait till the Supreme is gained within themselves. Naturally, Lord Krishna closes the chapter with the injunction that man should act here—without desire, anger or greed. This is the right way of action as exhaustively discussed in a previous chapter*.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन संवादे देवासुरसंपद्विभाग-
योगो नाम षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Om Tat Sat ity srimad bhagavadgitasupanisatsu
brahmavidyayam yogasastre sri krishnarjunasamavade
Daivasurasampath Vibhaga Yogonama
sodasodhyayaha.*

* Chapter 3, Karmayoga.

N.B : For the word meaning of, and our notes on, “Sankalpa Vakya”, please refer to the end of I and II Chapters.

Om Tat Sat. Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, in the Science of the eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the sixteenth discourse ends entitled :

THE DIVINE AND THE DEVILISH ESTATE.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER XVII

The concluding two stanzas of the last chapter introduced an idea that the *Sastra* is the final court of appeal for discrimination to arrive at its judgments. But it is very difficult for the average folk to develop that amount of proficiency in the scriptural codes. Thus an average man cannot get a ready-reckoner which will easily guide him in his life's pilgrimage. Now Arjuna's appetite to live the higher life more comprehensively has been fully generated in him and he is mentally planning to give Krishna's philosophy a fair trial. As a man of action when he mentally plans to live the Geeta-way-of-life, he finds it hard because of its insistence upon the "knowledge" of the *Sastras*. At the same time he is confident that he has developed in himself a sufficient 'faith' (*Sradha*) in the nobler way-of-life, as enunciated in this sacred scripture.

The chapter under discussion opens with this doubt whether it is sufficient that one lives with 'faith' a life of good conduct and noble aspirations, or is it necessary that he must 'know' the *Sastra* and that his 'faith' must be working implicitly obedient to the injunctions laid down in the *Sastra*?

Earlier also in Geeta on more than one occasion* 'faith' (*Sradha*) had been pointed out as the fuel required for the seeker to soar. The emphasis and importance given to the

* Chapter IV. Stanza 39 · Chapter XVI, Stanza 23.

faculty of *Sradha* were almost equal to those that were given to the *Sastra*, and, therefore, Arjuna has every right to raise the question whether even without the 'knowledge' of the *Sastras*, blind faith alone can take the seeker far.

The capacity in the human intellect not only to know and appreciate the *Sastra* but also to absorb and assimilate the noble ideals so completely as to bear upon all his actions is called *Sradha*. *Sradha* is that powerful impelling force that springs forth spontaneously from within, which the mind feels peculiarly as its own. It is that secret urge within propelled by which all layers of personality in an individual spring forth to act in their appointed fields. 'Faith' is the content and the very essence of the equipments of man's whole being 'Faith' gives the direction, the dash and the destination of one's determination.

Instead of directly answering the question the philosopher in Krishna takes this occasion to give a thorough exposition of 'faith' as worked in various fields of man's endeavours*—his physical indulgence (*ahara*), his dedicated activities (*yagna*), his self-denial (*tapas*), and his charity (*dana*).

In the scheme of the discourse, the Lord first of all explains that the very *Sradha* is of three kinds according to the nature of temperament (*Gunas*) which the individual entertains in himself. The three classifications under which the temperaments fall are: (1) balanced joy (*Sattwa*), (2) ambitious and feverish activities (*Rajas*), (3) vegetative existence and heedlessness (*Tamas*). Earlier* this topic of the three *gunas* governing and controlling the mental and intellectual life of men was already exhaustively dealt with.

* Chapter 14—'The three-fold *Gunas*'.

How men, under the influence of these *gunas* in varying proportions, would come to live the religious values and strive for spiritual unfoldment is being enumerated. From a close study of this discourse we can direct our activities away from the influences of the lower two urges, and guide our spiritual practices and currents of our divine life consistently on the royal path of sure success, the *Sattwic*.

CHAPTER XVII

अथ सप्तदशोऽध्यायः

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥१॥

Arjuna Uvaca :

1. *ye sastravidhim utsrujya*
yajante sraddhya nvitah
tesam nistha tu ka krsna
sattvam aho rajas tamah

ये-Who, शास्त्रविधिम् - the ordinances of the scriptures, उत्सृज्य-setting aside, यजन्ते - perform sacrifice, श्रद्धया - with faith, अन्विताः - endowed, तेषाम्-their, निष्ठा-condition, तु-verily, का-what, कृष्ण-O Krishna, सत्त्वम्-Sattva, अहो-or, रजः -Rajas, तमः - Tamas.

Arjuna Said :

1. Those who setting aside the ordinances of the scriptures, perform sacrifice with faith, what is their condition, O Krishna ? Is it Sattva, Rajas or Tamas ?

In this very opening stanza, Arjuna takes up the discussion, where it was left in the previous chapter, and gives it a definite push forward, making Krishna exhaustively expound the most profitable and dynamic way of spiritual life, clearly distinguishing it away from the unprofitable, and the positively self-dissipating channels of misconceived spiritual endeavour.

“*Setting aside the ordinances of the Sastra*” : The injunctions of the scriptural text are not generally available for all people and even when they are made available very few will have the intellectual capacity to understand them. In the very nature of life's excited activities around, and confusions and anxieties within, very few of us can hope to plan the paths of our life according to the *Sastra*-provided blueprint. But a sincere seeker may have a great ‘faith’ in the higher way-of-life and a deep devotion to the ideal preached and propounded generally by all the scriptures of the world. Hence this question.

If Sankara considers that faith depends upon one's character, Ramanuja adopts a less tolerant view and insists that those who, out of ignorance even, violate the *Sastras* whether with or without ‘faith’, are to be condemned.

Perform actions : (*Yajantah*) : The term (*Yagna*) here used need not be understood as only indicating the Vedic sacrifices and ritualistic performances. Geeta is almost a complete scripture and as such, it has got its own definitions

of its own terms. The term *Yagna* has been earlier* defined as to include all selfless co-operative endeavours of every individual in a society, undertaken so as to bring forth to manifestation the latent wealth and prosperity that are in that community. So, all acts done by an individual during his life in a spirit of selfless dedication to the general well-being can come under this term. Without knowing the serene harmony that throbs behind life, can one, who is striving hard in the world in a spirit of detachment and selflessness, hope to avoid agitations? What would be his condition (*Nishta*)? And in a parenthetical clause Arjuna adds what he wants to know is this: “whether such actions of men fall under the category of unactivity (*Sattva*), or of activity (*Rajas*), or of inactivity (*Tamas*).”

The answer of the Lord is exhaustive and all-comprehensive, indicating the three types of faiths playing in all the channels of human endeavour :

श्रीभगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।

सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥२॥

Sri Bhagavan Uvaca :

2. *trividha bhavati sraddha*
dehinam sa svabhavaja
sattaviki rajasi cai va
tamasi ce ti tam srnu

* Chapter 3.

त्रिविध-Threefold, भवति-is, श्रद्धा-faith, देहि-
नाम्-of the embodied, सा-which, स्वभावजा-(is) in-
herent in (their) nature, सात्त्विकी-Sattvic, (pure),
राजसी-Rajasic (passionate), च - and, एव - even,
तामसी-Tamasic (dark), च-and, इति-thus, ताम्-of
it, शृणु-hear (thou).

The Blessed Lord Said :

2. Threefold is the faith of the embodied, which is
inherent in their nature—the Sattvic (pure), the
Rajasic (passionate) and the Tamasic (dark).
Dost thou hear of it.

As a preface to his discourse, the Lord says that ‘faith’ (*Sradha*) itself is of three kinds; the divine, the undivine and the diabolic. *Sradha* determines the texture of our impressions in us, which in its turn commands our view-of-life. Our desires, thoughts and actions are charted by our view-of-life. Naturally, an individual’s physical activities, psychological behaviours and intellectual make-up are all ordered by the type of *Sradha* he has come to maintain in himself. And if the *Sradha* is of the wrong type, the entire expression of his personality in all walks of life and in every field of endeavour can only be ugly. As his inner disposition, so the man. The more an individual identifies himself with his physical sheath, the more crystallised becomes his ego, under the influence of his inner disposition. The temperaments that rule the behaviours in the humanity are three in number :* the Good (*Sattwic*) the Passionate (*Rajasic*) and the Dull (*Tamasic*).

* For a detailed discussion of these refer Charter XIV.

Why should we take into consideration these temperaments at all, and try to understand the types of 'faith' and their play in life? These are explained in the following : (17-2)

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥३॥

3. *sattvanurupa sarvasya*
sraddha bhavati bharata
sraddhamayo yam puruso
yo yacchraddhah sa eva sah

सत्त्वानुरूपा - In accordance with his nature,
 सर्वस्य-of each, श्रद्धा-faith, भवति-is भारत-O Bha-
 rata, श्रद्धामयः - consists of (his) faith, अयम्-this,
 पुरुषः - Man, यः - who, यच्छ्रद्धः - that (his) faith
 is, सः - he, एव - verily, सः - that (is).

3. The faith of each is in accordance with his nature,
 O Bharata. The man consists of his faith; as a
 man's faith is, so is he.

According to one's own nature (*Sattwanurupa*): The type of faith that feeds and nourishes each bosom is, we notice, vastly different from each other. The more we observe the differences the more we get confused. It becomes almost inexplicable why it should be so. The Lord in the Geeta explains that the 'faith' in each heart is ordered by its own nature. It is very difficult to say whether 'faith' orders nature or the nature prescribes the 'faith'; each is intimately wedded to the other, each obeys the other most faithfully indeed.

However, Geeta declares that it is the nature in an individual that rules his 'faith', although if faith can be

broken and remoulded in one, as it can be sometimes at the irresistible compulsion of painful experiences, the nature of that one does faithfully obey the new *Sradha*. But, generally speaking, the 'faith' in each man takes the hue and quality from the stuff of his being—the predominating temperament in him. The essence of 'faith' lies in the secret energy of the ego with which it holds fast its convictions and will to reach a definite chosen end by some well thought-out and entirely self-planned means.

Man's potentiality determines his 'faith' in a given end and this 'faith' then reacts upon this potentiality determining its future course, and moulds the being of the man in its turn. Both act upon each other. 'The nature of the one gives a clue to the other,' says Professor Nehal Chand in his musings upon this stanza. That the nature of the man is determined by the preponderance of any one of the *Gunās* over the others, has been already discussed.* As a result of such previous conservation of a particular tendency one of the 'qualities' gains a preponderance over the other two even from the childhood and this is indicated here by the term *Sattva*, according to which (*Anurupa*) is the faith entertained by the individual.

Sraddha in the individual: Man is constituted of and consists in his *Sraddha*. It was explained by Krishna that each devotee ultimately reaches the seat of his devotion, if he consistently and with sufficient intensity devotes himself for its attainment.†

As a man's faith, so is he (*Yo yath sraddha yeva saha*): Man is verily what his 'faith' is: The type of personality and

* Chapter 14--Stanza 10.

† Chapter 7—Stanzas 20 to 23.

its effectiveness or otherwise are all determined by the 'faith' under which it functions. That the achievement of a life is ever coloured by the type of 'faith' with which the individual pursues his activities,† is very well known and realised by all men of action. In the very language of the Geeta this idea was already explained in an earlier chapter.‡

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।

प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥४॥

4. *yajante sattvika devan*
yaksarakshamsi rajasah
pretan bhutaganams ca nye
yajante tamasa janah

यजन्ते—Worship, सात्त्विकाः—the Sattvic or pure men, देवान्—the Geds, यक्षरक्षांसि—the Yakshas and Rakshasas, राजसाः—The Rajasic or the passionate, प्रेतान्—ghosts, भूतगणान्—the hosts of Bhutas or the nature-spirits, च—and, अन्ये—the others, यजन्ते—worship, तामसाः—the Tamasic, जनाः—people

4. The Sattvic or pure men worship the Gods; the Rajasic or the passionate the Yakshas and the Rakshasas; the others—the Tamasic people or the dark folk worship the ghosts and the hosts of Bhutas or the nature-spirits.

† 'Such are the trend of our desires and the nature of our souls, just such each of us becomes'—Plato.

'Earnestness alone makes life eternity'—Goethe.

‡ Chapter 9 - Sloka 25.

Sattvic men worship Devas : Every man in life brings his entire devotion to offer at one altar or the other, and seeks a fulfilment from the benefits accrued from his invocations. In the scriptural language this is called *worship*. This need not indicate only the ritualistic worship of some God or Deity. The term 'worship' here can also embrace a wider implication. Every one of us is a worshipper at some altar chosen by us; even atheists are worshippers.. perhaps they devote themselves at the altar of sense-objects or of wealth or of power. In this ampler meaning, if we were to read the stanza the meaning becomes very self-evident indeed. Men of *sattvic* temperament, because of their serene composure and tranquil disposition seek their fulfilment at an altar of divinity indicating the higher impulses and the nobler qualities of the Soul. Naturally they seek and come to adore it.

Yakshas and Rakshasas by the Rajasic : Men of passionate nature (*Rajas*) are those who have extreme ambition and are constantly restless in their self-chosen field of activity. They are said to be worshipping and propitiating demi-gods (*yakshas*) and (*Rakshasas*) The idea here is that the choice of the altar will depend upon the silent demands of the heart of the devotee. One will never go to a book-stall to purchase some dress. So too, the active and the passionate type of men can feel an admiration for and can come to appreciate only an equally *rajo*-ful demi-god or deity.

It is interesting to note that *Yakshas* are described as 'the brothers of Kubera', who is himself the minister in charge of Finance in Heaven, and the *Rakshasas* as 'beings of strength and power'. All men of action, ambitious of success and achievement, would necessarily seek the friendship of only *brothers of rich men* and *men of power and strength*. Now turn wherever you will; you can find the truth of this principle amply illustrated.

The tamasic men (worship) the prethas and buthas : The dead spirits and such other low and vicious powers are invoked by the men of 'inactivity' (*Tamas*) for the satisfaction of some of their low urges for vicious sense-gratifications. Men of low moral calibre and false education generally would try to fulfil their pernicious ambitions with the help of the wretched vengeful scum of the society (*Pretas*, *Bhutas*), who, though living, are dead to all the sweetness and goodness in life. These hired *goondas*, generally chosen from professional jail-birds, are the fit powers to be invoked in order that low and criminal ambition of the *Tamasik* can be fulfilled—the hired *pretas* in society!

The same import has been brought out in many earlier stanzas.* The modern man would be rather curious to know whether there really exist such powers and deities as *pretas* and *bhutas*. It is in fact immaterial for the purpose of the Geeta of this portion, whether such powers *really* exist or not. They are indicative of certain types of powers which are available in this world of ours.

The help gained from good friends, the protection invoked from the rich and the powerful, and the enormous strength gathered from the low thoughtless men of criminal intentions—are the different types of 'altars' at which men of serenity (*Sattwik*), of ambition (*Rajasik*), of heedlessness (*Tamasik*), generally seek their individual satisfaction. From the nature of a man's field of activity we can, to a large extent, come to understand to what type he belongs.

That the spirit of devotion in men ever remaining the same, each will select according to the type of his shaddha his own

*Chapter VII – Stanza 20 to 23. Chapter IX – Stanza 23 to 25.

altar of devotion has been shown in the above. The wrong way of striving is painted below :

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः ।

दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः कामरागवलान्विताः ॥५॥

5. *asastravहितam ghoram*
tapyante ye tapo janah
dambhahamkarasamyuktah
kamaragabalanvītah

अशास्त्रविहितम्-Not enjoined by the scripture
घोरम्-terrific, तप्यन्ते-practise, ये - who, तपः - auster-
terity, जनाः -Men, दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः -given to hypo-
crisy and egoism, कामरागवलान्विताः - by the force
of lust and attachment

5. Those men who practise terrific austerities not en-
joined by the scriptures, given to hypocrisy and
egoism, impelled by the force of lust and attach-
ment.

कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः ।

मां चैवान्तः शरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान् ॥६॥

6. *karasayantah sarirastham*
bhutaqramam acetasah
mam cai va ntahsarirastham
tan viddhy asuraniscayan

कर्षयन्तः - Torturing, शरीरस्थम् -in the body,
भूतग्रामम्-all the elements, अचेतसः -senseless, माम्
-me, च-and, एव-even, अन्तःशरीरस्थम्-who dwells

n the body within, तान्-them, विद्धि-know, आसुर-
नेश्वरान्-to be of demoniac resolves.

6. Senseless, torturing all the elements in the body and
Me also, who dwells in the body within, know
thou these to be of demonical resolves.

Over enthusiasm can produce only a physical exhaustion,
and an inward fatigue. No spiritual unfoldment can be
expected from unintelligent expenditure of energy in wrong
channels merely because it is undertaken in the name of
religion. The majority of seekers misapply their energies
and they come to suffer. Therefore, Krishna considers it
easier for him to paint the picture of the false seeker and
ridicule his unintelligent methods.

Physical persecutions and self-denials are, no doubt,
some times prescribed to some sturdy physical structures,
for some limited period. At the same time, it is not proper
or correct to believe that any kind of self-denial would con-
stitute an austerity and that by following it, creative unfold-
ment of the inward personality-structure could be success-
fully brought about. The austerities must be scientific and,
therefore, not against the injunctions laid down in the sacred
books that discuss this subject.

Some people generally undertake severe austerities only
as a show. Men ' *given to ostentation and egoism* ' are not
fit for austerity. They become mentally unfit for *tapas* so
long as they are lusty and extremely attached to the world-
of-objects around. Such individuals cannot practise auste-
rities.

Even if such people practise austerities, when they devel-
op some inward dynamism, as a result of their *tapas*, their
intentions being gross, they will only misuse the new-found

strength in the wrong channels, and, in the end, bring about their own self-destruction.—the famous examples of *Rakshasas* in the Puranas are illustrative enough. Such people, practising austerities, regardless of the correct injunction of the *Sastras*, belong to the *Asuric*-type.

Me, dwelling in the body : Such unintelligent austerities not only oppress the elements constituting the physical frame but also the Sacred and the Divine Lord within. Life gets choked as it were in such an individual—meaning, life cannot express its fullest beauty through such a broken form. Extreme *tapas* is stupid and is condemned* here. Intelligent control is *tapas*, not cruel self-torture.

The three kinds—The Sattwik, the Rajasik and the Tamasik—of food, of worship, of austerity, and of gift are discussed in the following stanzas :

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।

यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमां शृणु ॥७॥

7. *aharas tv api sarvasya
trividho bhavati priyah
yajnas tapas tatha danam
tesam bhedom imam srnu*

आहारः – Food, तु – indeed, अपि – also, सर्वस्य – of all, त्रिविधा – threefold, भवति – is, प्रियः – dear, यज्ञः – sacrifice, तपः – austerity, तथा – also, दानम् – alms-giving, तेषाम् – their, भेदम् – distinction, इमाम् – this, शृणु – hear.

* Gautama Buddha warns his disciples : ‘ The habitual practice of asceticism or self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable, ought not to be followed ’.

7. The food also which is dear to each is threefold, as also sacrifice, austerity and alms-giving. Hear thou the distinction of these.

Introducing the theme that is to follow, Lord Krishna enumerates the topics that he is going to discuss. The temperamental influences that govern the mind and its thought-life express themselves in all departments of activity in which the individual employs himself. His choice of food, of friends, of the type of emotion in his bosom, of the view-of-life that he will be entertaining, are all indicative of the type to which the seeker belongs. As a matter of fact everyone living on the surface of the earth comes to express himself to be in one of these classifications due to the preponderance of one or the other of the three temperaments (*gunas*).

Yagna, Tapa, Dana : In his choice of 'food', in the type of 'sacrifices' which he would feel inspired to make, in the texture of his 'self denials' that he would exhibit, and in the quality and quantity of his 'charity', he will declare himself to belong to one or the other of the three types.

Here follows a detailed analysis of one's inward nature and naturally, one's outward expression, when one is under the irresistible influence of any one particular *guna*. These stanzas are not to be misconstrued as a ready-reckoner to classify others. Hinduism, in its essential beauty is a subjective science for bringing about a fuller unfoldment of the dormant potentialities in an individual's own personality. In unravelling the beauties of the soul and in exploiting the strength of the heart, each one will have to purify himself from the dullness of *Tamas*, and agitations of the *Rajas*, and keep oneself in the creative alertness and spiritual glow of *Sattva*.

Hereunder we find enumerated a series of symptoms from which we can classify correctly ourselves :

आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥८॥

8. *ayusattvabalarogya-*

sukhapritivivardhanah

rasyah sntgdhah sthira hradya

aharah sattvikapriah

आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः -

Those which increase Ayu (life) Sattva (purity), Balam (strength), Arogyam (health), Sukham (joy), Prithi (cheerfulness and good appetite), रस्याः—what are savoury, स्निग्धाः—oleaginous, स्थिराः—substantial, हृद्याः—agreeable, आहाराः—the foods, सात्त्विकप्रियाः— are dear to Sattvic (pure).

8. The foods which increase life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness (good appetite), which are savoury and oleaginous, substantial and agreeable are dear to the Sattvic (pure).

In describing the peculiar taste for foods in good men of spiritual urge (*Sattwa*), it is said that they like only such diet which increases the vitality (*Ayuh*), and not sheer bulk ; which supplies the energy for meditative purposes (*Veerya*) ; which discovers for him a secret strength (*Bala*) to resist the temptations in him for the sense-objects ; which provides health (*Arogya*) so that he may not too often fall ill and come to suffer a break in his regular sadhana. Such people will have a natural inclination to take food which will augment joy (*Preethi*) and inward cheerfulness (*Sukha*). In short, such creative men, by their own choice, enjoy only

foods that will be clean and wholesome with no chance for them when consumed to putrefy within.

All the different types of food eaten by the humans in the world have been classified and brought under four types on the basis of their physical properties. They are : the savoury, the greasy, the firm and the cordial types of food.* Men of purity instinctively like all these types of foods when they have the above-mentioned effects upon the consumers—when they, the consumers, have digested and assimilated them.

No doubt, food has certain effects upon the eater. Generally an eater to an extent is conditioned by the type of diet he is consuming. Not only that our inward nature is built by the type of food consumed, but the inward nature in its turn commands our tastes, and we find very often that we have developed an irresistible appetite for certain types of food. In the case of animals it is noticed that they sometimes change their diet, according to their physical need in their life ; dogs and cats are often seen eating grass, cows licking salt-slabs, etc., children eating sand, and pregnant women, during their pregnancy, manifesting different tastes at different periods of their progress †

Explaining the Rajasic type of men and their taste, in food, the Lord says :

* There are some who translate these terms as the Sweet, the Soft, the Nourishing, and the Agreeable foods are dear to the ' Good '.

† A rare case of one lady eating lime from the wall of her own house has been noticed in life.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्ण तीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥९॥

9. *katvamlalavanatyusna-
tiksnaruksavidahinah
ahara rajasasye sta
duhkasokamayapradah*

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः – Those that are, कटुः –bitter, आम्लः –sour, लवणः –saline, अत्युष्ण –excessively hot, तीक्ष्णः –pungent, रूक्षः –dry, विदाही –burning, आहाराः –foods, राजस्य –of the Rajasic, इष्टाः –are liked, दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः –are productive of pain, grief and disease.

9. The foods that are bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning, are liked by the Rajasic and are productive of pain, grief and disease.

Men of energy, the ‘Passionate’, desire such food (*Rajasasyeshta*) that have strong flavour and dense taste. Bitter, sour, saltish, very hot, pungent, harsh, burning tastes are to the liking of all vigorous men, restlessly striving to fulfil their uncontrolled passions and desires (*Rajasik*).

Such a diet creates in an individual, no doubt, brilliant energies but in their wildness, they are to a degree uncontrollable and, therefore, in their final reactions they led the eater towards a life, productive of ‘*pain, grief and disease*’

A student of these discussions in Geeta is not justified if he comes to consider that by a control of diet the thought-

discipline in himself will come to pass. From these stanzas we have to understand that when the texture of thought improves, the individual finds himself changing in his tastes, even in his choice of food which would give him full satisfaction.

What type of food would men of darkness (Tamasik) choose?

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥१०॥

10. *yatayamam gatarasam*

puti paryusitam ca yat

ucchistam api ca medhyam

bhojanam tamasapriyam

यातयामम्-(is) stale, गतरसम्-is tasteless, पूति-putrid, पर्युषितम्-rotten, च-and, यत्-which, उच्छिष्टम्-refuse, अपि-also, च-and, अमेध्यम्-impure, भोजनम्-food, तामसप्रियम्-liked by the Tamasik.

10. That which is stale, tasteless, putrid and rotten, refuse and impure, is the food liked by the Tamasik.

Spoiled (*Yatha-yaman*): A day is divided in our old calculations in the *Sastras*, into eight *yamas*, wherein a period of three hours constitute a *yama*. Therefore, 'food cooked three hours earlier, gone cold' is that which is considered as spoiled in the stanza. In these days of canned food, preserved-fruits, stored-vegetables and frigidaire-facilities almost a substantial majority of us have come to love stale food!

Tasteless (*Gatha-rasa*) : In South India, we find a peculiar hunger for taking rice that has been kept soaked in water

the previous night. It becomes the next morning, both stale and tasteless, I suppose.

Putrid (*Pooti*) : Men of inertia have a natural liking for stinking food that has an insufferable fragrance for others. The *pulav* of the modern tables perhaps belong to this category ; so too, prawns...we can multiply examples. Men of purity, however, would instinctively revolt against a diet that has any stink about it.

Stale (*Paryushitham*) : Food that has been cooked overnight or that has been kept for days together. Here we can include all the fermented drinks, which the *Tamasic* people love to indulge in. All drinks are fermented and the kick in them increases as the age of preparation increases.

Insanitary and unclean food seems to attract the taste of all despicable men of insufferable ignorance and low culture. They love to eat 'refuse' (*ucchishtam*) that are left over, and impure (*Amedyam*) filthy food that is not fit for human consumption. The above-enumerated list is a comprehensive report on the base and disgusting tastes of the *tamasic* men of low calibre and dull discrimination—the 'Dull'.

What type of sacrifices these three classes men would themselves engage cheerfully in?

अफलाकांक्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥११॥

11. *aphalakanksibhir yajno
vidhidrsto ya ijjate
yastavyam eve ti manah
samadhyaya sa sattvikah*

अफलाकांक्षिभिः -By men desiring no fruit, यज्ञः -sacrifice, विधिदृष्टः -as enjoined by the ordinance, यः -which, इज्यते -is offered, यष्टव्यम् -ought to be offered, एव -only, इति -thus, मनः -the mind, समाधाय -having fixed, सः -that, सात्त्विकः -Sattvic or pure.

11. That sacrifice which is offered by men without desire for fruit as enjoined by ordinance, with a firm faith that sacrifice is a duty, is Sattvic or pure.

After exhausting the classification of the temperaments as declared in the very tastes exhibited by different people in the world, Geetha continues to indicate how in the very type of activities undertaken there is an unmistakable declaration of the temperamental beauty or otherwise of the individual.

Performed by men desiring no fruit : Sacrifices undertaken by men of purity are always executed in a spirit of selflessness. We had already explained earlier in the Geeta that burning anxiety for the fruits of action is an unprofitable channel of dissipation of the sacred and vital human energy. Fruit belongs to the future periods of time, and to waste the present, worrying over the future, is, indeed, an unintelligent policy of striving in existence.

As required by ordinance : Actions in the world fall under four categories, according to the ancient vedic lore. Of them, desire-ridden (*Kamyā*) and positively self-insulting, and, therefore, forbidden acts (*Nishidha*) are the two types that are to be studiously avoided. And the other two classes (a) (*Nithya*) and (b) the special duties on special occasions (*Naimithyaka*) are the types of actions that should not be

avoided but must be most diligently pursued. These two types *Nithya* and *Naimithyaka* together constitute what the Sastra terms as the unavoidable 'obligatory duties' (*Nithya Karma*). These actions and duties are indicated here as those 'required by the ordinance'. This term used here is in contrast with the *Tamasika*-type of activity, 'wherein no ordinance is observed' and always 'devoid of faith'.*

Sacrifice is our duty: This is the motive that propels the good to act in life. He suffers no dissipation of his inward energies either through anxieties to drive himself to a particular goal, or through his restlessness in herding the environments to settle themselves into a pre-planned and pre-conceived system of harmony. Their mind is ever at rest in its own native satisfaction. They are consciously happy that they are pursuing a line of action which is most conducive to the welfare of all. Such actions are classed under the *Sattwika*-type of sacrifices.

The rajasika type is being explained :

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत् ।

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥१२॥

12. *abhisamdhaya tu phalam*

dambhartham api cai va yat

ijyate bharatasrestha

tam yajnam viddhi rajasam

अभिसंधाय-Seeking for, तु-indeed, फलम्-fruit, दम्भार्थम् - for ostentation, अपि - also, च - and, एव - even, यत् - which, इज्यते - is offered, भरतश्रेष्ठः - O

* Chapter XVII – Stanza 13.

best of the Bharatas, तम् - that, यज्ञम् - sacrifice,
विधि - know, राजसम् - Rajasic.

12. The sacrifice which is offered, O best of the Bharatas, seeking for fruit and for ostentation, know thou that to be a Rajasic Yagna.

With a view to gaining a fruit : In order to gain a chosen result some people act in the world outside and, naturally, while in the field of activity they turn themselves to be too much preoccupied with their anxieties and worries. They grow more and more nervous at their own imaginary fears—they live ever in an atmosphere of fear whether they will gain the particular chosen goal or not.

For ostentation : There are others in the world who act, ever so vigorously, not necessarily for gaining any predetermined goal, but merely for satisfying their vanity in the present, by exhibiting their wealth or knowledge, and thus generally proving themselves to be show-boys of society. Ordinarily there are many who work in the world and make sacrifices. These do not constitute a divine act, nor can they be ever expected to yield a reward of inward cheerfulness or peace.

Such sacrifices undertaken—by men who are anxious to reach a particular goal and who work for satisfying their vanity in the community—are to be understood as *Rajasika*.

What are the Tamasika sacrifices?

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।

श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥१३॥

13. *vidhihinam asrstannam*

mantrahinam adaksinam

sraddhahirahitam yajnam

tamasaṁ paricakṣate

विधिहीनम् - Without keeping to ordinance,
असृष्टान्नम् - in which no food is distributed, मन्त्रहीनम् -
which is devoid of Mantras, अदक्षिणम् - which is
devoid of gifts, श्रद्धाविरहितम् - which is devoid of
faith, यज्ञम् - sacrifice, तामसम् - Tamasic, परिचक्षते -
(they) declare.

13. They declare that sacrifice to be Tamasic which is
contrary to the ordinances, in which no food is
distributed, which is devoid of Mantras and
gifts, and which is devoid of faith.

Disobeying all the prescriptions laid down in the scriptures and acting against all Vedic injunctions—contrary to all the principles laid down by the Science of right-living—the sacrifices performed become of the lowest type. Such a sacrifice cannot bring about happiness at all either to the performer or, in its final analysis, to his generation around him.

Without distribution of food: The utter necessities of life are, in the vocabulary of modern age, indicated by the familiar phrase 'food-clothing-shelter' In the scriptural

language of Hinduism the term 'food' indicated all these necessities of life. A man of sacrifice and right action cannot expect any inward development because of his actions, unless they are accompanied by a mental development and an expansion in love which makes him share whatever he has got with those who have not got them.

Apart from these above-mentioned two, when rituals are conducted without *mantra* or without distribution of the reward for the educated (*Dakshina*), those sacrifices are classified as the *Tamsika*.

In order to classify the three types of Tapas, pursued by the different types of people, *here we have three consecutive stanzas defining and explaining what Tapas really means :*

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शरीरं तप उच्यते ॥१४॥

14. *devadvijaguruprajna-
pujanam saucam arjavam
brahmacaryam ahimsa ca
sariram tapa ucyate*

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं - Worship of the Gods, the twice-born, the teachers and the wise, शौचं - purity, आर्जवं - straightforwardness, ब्रह्मचर्यं - celibacy, अहिंसा - non-injury, च - and, शरीरं - of the body, तपः - austerity, उच्यते - is called.

14. Worship of the Gods, the twice-born, the teachers and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, celibacy, and non-injury are called the austerity of the body.

Worship of the Devas, twice-born the Guru and the Wise :
 To maintain an attitude of attunement with a higher ideal whereby the meditator develops in himself the qualities of the meditated is called worship. All cultural developments, moral growths and ethical unfoldments can be accomplished, within oneself, only through these processes implied in worship. It is almost like "the touch method" of magnetisation.* One who is trying to come away from one's inward personality-encumbrances must necessarily have an attitude of devotion and reverence towards the ideals represented in the Deva, the Deity, worked out and lived by the *twice-born*, preached by *Gurus* and recommended by the *Wise*.

"Twice-born" (*Dwija*): The term indicates the *Brahmanas*; and the term *Brahmana* means one who has realised the Self. Born as we are from the womb of our mothers, we are all born as human with certain intellectual beauties, no doubt, but also with many moral defects. Born out of the womb all right, but we are yet in the womb of the matter. To hatch ourselves out of our matter-identifications and to emerge out chuckling in the joy of Perfection is to grow ourselves into the Divine Estate of the Godmen. This is conceived in our philosophy as the "second birth", and one who has accomplished it is called the "twice-born": once born from the womb and for a second time grown out of all the limitations suffered by the Spirit in Its seeming identifications with matter.

Purity and straightforwardness : The importance of these two have been already discussed earlier.† External cleanli-

* A soft-iron piece is repeatedly rubbed with a horse-shoe-magnet whereby the iron-bit so treated gains to itself the magnetic properties.

† 'Purity'—refer Chapter XVI - stanza 3 and

'Straightforwardness'—Chapter XVI - stanza 1.

ness, not only physical but also environmental, is an unavoidable qualification for a true aspirant. Unless a seeker practises diligently straightforwardness in his dealings with others he will be developing in himself a split-personality, which would drain away all his composure, tranquillity and mental vitality.

Brahmacharya : Constant revelling in the contemplation of the supreme Brahman is called Brahmacharya.* This is not possible unless our nature is turned away from bodily indulgence in sense-objects and our minds are trained to turn inward to the Spirit. Therefore all mental disciplines, by which we come to develop in us this introversion, are together comprehended by the term 'Brahmacharya'. Even a medical college student is called a doctor, because he is applying himself to the direct means to become one : and the right means is not far from the true end.

Non-injury : This term was already discussed many times earlier, very exhaustively. Refraining from bringing about any physical harm to others in the society by our mind is called 'non-injury'. Physically it is impossible for us to continue our existence without bringing even unconsciously some sort of injury to others, but the attitude in us can be changed, whereby the seeming unavoidable harm itself can bring about a great blessing to the world. A doctor with a sharp knife ripping open a patient's abdomen, though an act of injury can itself ultimately bring about a cure for the patient's illness. Diligently avoiding all acts of injuring others, from our emotional and intellectual realms is the strict 'non-injury' that can be practised in life.

1

All that has been explained above* constitutes the bodily asceticism : physical austerity.

Austerity (*Tapas*) is not merely a life of brutal self-denials, but on the other hand, it is an intelligent method of living in the right relationship with the world-of-objects thereby avoiding all unnecessary dissipations of our vital energies. The energies that are so economised and conserved within are thereafter directed and employed in cultivating the creative fields. This scheme—of discovering precious new energies, conserving them intelligently, and directing them into more profitable fields of spiritual inquiry—is called *Tapas*. Self-control, conservation of energy, and redirecting the same to fertilize fresh fields of cultivation within one's own bosom are all meant herein, and the stanza concludes with a clear endorsement that this is true *Tapas* intelligently pursued at our body level.

Tapas in speech is now described :

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यासनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥१५॥

15. *anudvegakaram vakyam*
satyam priyahitam ca yat
svadhyayabhyasanam cai va
vangmayam tapa ucyate

अनुद्वेगकरं - Causing no excitement, वाक्यं -speech,
सत्यं - truthful, प्रियहितं - pleasant and beneficial, च-

* Brahmani Caranthi Ithi Brahmacharya

† (1) Worshipping of the Devas, the twice-born, the Gunas and the wise, (2) purity, (3) straightforwardness, (4) Brahmacharya, and (5) non-injury.

and, यत् - which, स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं - the practice of the study of the Vedas, च - and, एव - also, वाङ्मयं - of speech, तपः - austerity, उच्यते - is called.

15. Speech which causes no excitement, truthful, pleasant and beneficial, the practice of the study of the Vedas are called the austerity of speech.

Speech is a powerful vehicle in man and it reflects the intellectual calibre, the mental discipline and the physical self-control of the speaker. Unless he is well-formed at all these levels, his words will have no force, no magic about them. Again, speech is the constant activity in all and it is the gateway through which the greatest amount of one's energies are wasted. To control and conserve this unproductive waste is a great inner wealth indeed for the seeker.

This does not mean that one must enter into a self-ruining, disgustingly irritating, silence (*Mowna*). Power of speech must be made use of, for integrating the personality in the Seeker. There is an art of using this power in the right way beneficial to the aspirant as well as to others. This technique of employing speech in the most profitable way is being indicated here in this stanza. The idea gathered in the previous stanza is being more and more deepened by the clearer suggestions contained in the stanza now under discussion—that Tapas is not a diabolic act of breaking and loosing oneself but it is a benevolent scheme for re-making and rediscovering oneself.

Speech that causes no shock : The words spoken must be such that they bring no disturbance to others; they “should neither be irritating nor obscene”. The real

touch-stone to know whether we are speaking the right words or not is in the reaction of the listeners as expressed so unmistakably on their faces. But generally people speak with their eyes shut, or even when they are open they are almost always a pair of blind ones, blinking! Many a miserable man has failed in his efforts in life, and lost all his friends and relatives merely because of the bitterness of his tongue, the harshness of his words, the stink of his indiscreet thoughts.

True, agreeable, and beneficial (*Satyam-priyam-hitam*): Words uttered to express the truth in an agreeable style, for the blessing of others constitute "speech", and when properly handled and made use of, it should bless the speaker himself.

In telling a lie a lot of energy is wasted and this waste is avoidable if one were to take the policy of truthfulness in his expression. Words that are harmoniously bringing forth the exact shade of ideas in the intellect are "truthful" expressions, and those that are false in the mouth, distorting deliberately the intentions and meanings of the intellect are called falsehood. In the name of truthfulness one can become a disagreeable creature in society. This is not allowed in a seeker. Geeta accepts only that speech as truthful which is also at once agreeable. By its unsaid words the Lord's Song seems to say that when a truth is disagreeable to other, the speaker is required to maintain a discreet silence!

It is not sufficient that the words in the speech should be honest and agreeable, but they should also be beneficial. Speech should not be wasted. Unprofitable talking is a great drain upon man's energies. Talk only when you want

to express agreeable ideas of permanent values, which would be useful for the listeners. Those who are respecting these qualities in their day-to-day verbal activities can be considered as men performing “austerity in speech”.

Regular study of the scriptures: Control of speech certainly does not mean entering into a state of inert and lifeless silence of the grave. Investing the energies of speech in self-profiting and self-creative lines of endeavour is considered by Krishna as “*tapas* in speech”. *Swadhyaya* is a technical term used in our sacred literature to indicate the careful study of and deep reflections on the theme of the scriptures. The vital energy so economised in the daily life through a policy of “speaking only that which is beneficial, agreeable and truthful”, is invested to chant, to reflect, to meditate over the *mantras* of the Upanishads and other scriptures.

This stanza is complete in its explanation of the technique. The first line indicates the channels of economy possible in the daily expenditure in speech. The second line shows the avenues of investment whereby the seeker can expect to gain for himself a greater dividend of fuller joy. Both the schemes are suggested so completely in the stanza as to indicate the “austerity in speech”.

Tapas of the mind is now taken up for discussion :

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥१६॥

16. *manahprasadah saumyatvam*
maunam atmavinigrahaḥ
bhavasamsuddhir ity etat
tapo manasam ucyate

मनःप्रसादः - Serenity of mind, सौम्यत्वम् - good heartedness, मौनम् - silence, आत्मविनिग्रहः - self-control, भावसंशुद्धिः -purity of nature, इति—thus, एतत्—this, तपः -austerity, मानसम्—mental, उच्यते—is called.

16. Serenity of mind, good heartedness, silence, self-control, purity of nature—this is called the mental austerity.

Five noble values of life are enumerated herein which when lived, they in their aggregate effectively produce the “ *tapas* of the mind ”. Serenity of mind can be gained only when our relationship with the world outside is put on a healthier basis of understanding, tolerance and love. One who is an uncontrolled sensualist can have little serenity or composure. Mind is the instrument that runs out through the sense-organs into the sensual field to eke out its satisfactions. The driving force that sets the mind on its endless errands is the intellect ever seething with its desires. Quietude of the mind can be gained only when it is protected from both the inflow of tempting sense-objects from the outer world and from the whipping desires that march out from our intellect to drive the mind out into the fields-of-enjoyment. In fact, a seeker who has discovered for himself a divine ideal—in the contemplations of which his mind forgets to run about or his intellect overlooks to vomit out new desires—alone can hope to win the serenity of the mind (*Manaprasada*).

Kindness (*Soumyathwam*): That warm feeling of affection to all, which readily rises in a heart of true devotion and love, is kindness. And that kindly seeker

who lives in this divine attitude to all things and beings around, will have no chance of entertaining the feeling that he is outrageously molested by, or even temporarily upset with his environment.

Silence (Mowna): We have already noted that “not speaking” is *not* ‘Mowna’. In this stanza while enumerating the “austerities of the mind” Lord Krishna speaks of “silence”. It is neither a contradiction, nor a mistake. Silence of speech must arise from the relative silence of the mind. Thus *Mowna* means that inward noiseless calm, which one comes to experience when corroding passions and exhausting desires are no more boiling up in one’s mind. It also can mean “the state of *Muni*”, implying “the state of constant contemplation.”

Self-control: The above mentioned three qualities—the serenity of composure, the constant kindness towards others and the unbroken calm silence within—are impossible unless we are able to deliberately control our inward nature. The animal in us is generally very powerful, and unless we are ever vigilant the lower nature in us may upset our inward balance and equanimity.

Honesty of motive: Self-control is not possible unless the motives in us are pure and serene. Without any definite goal in life, without planning, we are, on our onward march towards that ideal, apt to fall a victim to the various temptations enroute and come to walk and exhaust ourselves in the bylanes of life. To stick on constantly on the grand-road to success is to assure to ourselves a happy pilgrimage to Truth. The urge in us that motivates all our mental activities must be inspiring and divine or else the chances are that we will be undermining our own perfec-

tions and ruining our own chances of making life a great success.

The above three stanzas thus give us a clear picture of what is true *Tapas* in our bodily contacts with the world outside, in our speech and in our mental life. The very same *tapas* is pursued by different people, and even when they do so, with equal faith, each of them is observed to gain different results. It is not accidental. The *Tapaswins* are of different temperaments: the good (*Sattvic*), the passionate (*Rajasic*) and the dull (*Tamasic*). According to their governing temperaments they act differently, with different tempo and with different emphasis, so that they come to reap divergent results from the different types of *tapas* performed by them.

In the following stanzas, the three types of tapaswins and the nature of their tapas are indicated:

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।

अफलाकांक्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥१७॥

17. *sraddhaya paraya taptam*
tapas tat trividham naraih
aphalakanksibhir yuktaih
sattvikam paricaksate

श्रद्धया—With faith, परया—highest, तप्तम्—practised, तपः—austerity, तत्—that, त्रिविधम्—three fold, नरैः—by men, अफलाकांक्षिभिः—desiring no fruit, युक्तैः—steadfast, सात्त्विकम्—Sattvic, परिचक्षते—(they) declare.

17. This threefold austerity, practised by steadfast men, with the utmost faith, desiring no fruit, they call Sattvic.

When men practise austerities of body, tongue and mind, steadily “with no clinging attachment to or anxiety for the fruits thereof”, their *tapas* falls under the type: the *Sattwic*. The “good” are those integrated men who refuse to worry themselves about the future because they know that in the harmony in nature, the future is the resultant of the total past modified in the present.* Since the perfection and efficiency of the present activities determine and command the future results, it is certainly unintelligent to worry over the future and spoil the very quality of the present activities. Thus the “good”, desiring no fruit, but all the same practise, with great sincerity, the three-fold *tapas* as explained above, come to reap a large dividend from their austerities.

The passionate type does the following type of tapas :

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥१८॥

18. *saikaramanapujartham*

tapo dambhena cai va yat

kriyate tad iha proktam

rajasam calam adhruvam

सत्कारमानपूजार्थम्—With the object of gaining good reception, honour and worship, तपः—aus-

* “The continuity of the past modified in the present is the future”.

terity, दम्भेन-with hypocrisy, च-and, एव-even, यत्-which, क्रियते-is practised, तत्-that, इह - here, प्रोक्तम् - is said, राजसम् - Rajasic, चलम् - unstable, अध्रुवम् - transitory.

18. The austerity which is practised with the object of gaining good reception, honour and worship, and with hypocrisy is here said to be Rajasic, unstable and transitory.

Penance that is performed with a view to gaining respect, honour and reverence is said to be of the *Rajasika*—type, performed generally by men of “passionate ” nature. Self-control and self-application pursued—not for the purpose of one’s own inward development, but only for hoodwinking the world and getting out of them a cheap respect—reverence or worship exhibited are indeed one of the basest deceits that a man of culture can ever practise. Earlier Sri Bhagavan Himself* called such men hypocrites. Seekers belonging to this group perform their austerities mainly for their propaganda value, and hence, Bhagavan says their *tapas* is “with ostentation” (*Dhambena*).

One may wonder what harm is there to practise this type of *tapas*? After all *tapas*, as we observed is “economy of thought forces and the intelligent investment of this new-found energy in the more creative fields of self-development”. And yet, the Geetacharya condemns those who perform *tapas* with this wrong motive in them, and declares that such *tapas* is “unstable and transitory”. Any intelligent self-effort ordinarily should have a time-lapse before

* Chapter III—Stanzas 6 and 7.

it can produce its results. Self-application must be constant and continuous in order that it may produce the substantial results. When *tapas* is performed with such a low motive as of winning respectability in society, it cannot even gather the necessary amount of intensity, and thus, *tapas* of the “passionate” can only end in a lot of unproductive and painful self-denials.

The dull-witted pursue the Tamasik type of tapas :

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥१९॥

19. *mudhagrahena tmano yat*
pīḍaya kriyate tapah
parasyo tsadanartham va
tat tamasam udahrtam

मूढग्राहेण - Out of a foolish notion, आत्मनः - of the self, यत् - which, पीडया - with torture, क्रियते - is practised, तपः - austerity, परस्य - of another, उत्सादनार्थम् - for the purpose of destroying, वा - or, तत् - that, तामसम् - Tamasik, उदाहृतम् - is declared.

19. That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture or, for the purpose of destroying another, is declared to be Tamasik.

Tapas undertaken with a foolish obstinacy by means of self-culture, and “austerities” indulged in for the sake of destroying others are of the lowest type. A *tapaswin* must have clear notions as to why he has undertaken the *tapas*. And also he should know what is *Tapas* and how to do it.

Without a correct knowledge of the technique no seeker can independently walk the path of inward integration and come to gain the spiritual fulfilment.

When the Vedic notion of *tapas* is misconstrued, the seeker will be only at best, torturing himself. Self-torture cannot bring about any unveiling of the true beauty of the Soul ; it can only create an unclean caricature of the Perfection in us. Twisted and torn into a disfigured personality, perverted in its emotion and unclean in its ideals—this alone can be the out come of any unintelligent austerity.

And when this misconceived, wrongly practised, austerities are undertaken by any one for bringing about sorrow and discomfort to others and to himself such *tapas* is considered as *Tamasika*.

Charity also can fall under three kinds :

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥२०॥

20. *datavyam iti yad danam*

diyate anupakarine

dese kale ca patre ca

tad danam sattvikam smrtam

दातव्यम्—Ought to be given, इति—thus, यत्—that, दानम्—gift, दीयते—is given, अनुपकारिणे—to one who does no service (in return), देशे—in a fit place, काले - in time, च—and, पात्रे—to a worthy person, च—and, तत् - that, दानम् - gift, सात्त्विकम् - Sattvic, स्मृतम् - is held to be.

20. That gift which is given to one who does nothing in return, knowing it to be a duty to give in a fit place and time to a worthy person, that gift is held to be Sattvic.

That gift which is given to some one because of one's conviction, that "it is an act that is to be done" is the right type of charity. Even if the recipient be one who does no service in return (*anupakari*), the right type of charity expects the benefactor to make no discrimination against the recipients of his charity. The gift is to be offered in a fit place and to a worthy person. Such a charity made with a *right* faith, to the *right* person, in the *right* time and place is of the *Sattwika*-type.

There is a school which believes that charity must be given away as a tree does its fruits. The fruits on a tree are available to all pedestrians that come under its shade—irrespective of the pedestrians' race, status and sex. They argue that as the trees do not make any discrimination between one enjoyer and the other, so too man should, without making any discrimination between one recipient and other, share his possessions freely.

Many will find it difficult to believe and live up to this principle. Geeta insists, insist does it rightly, that since man is not merely a tree, he must use his faculty of discrimination and see whether his charities are done to the deserving.

The Rajasik type is described below :

यत्तुप्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः ।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥२१॥

21. *yat tu pratyupakaratham*
phalam uddisya va punah
diyate ca pariklistam
tad danam rajasam smrtam

यत्-Which, तु - indeed, प्रत्युपकारार्थम् - with a view to receive in return, फलम् - fruit, उद्दिश्य - looking for, वा - or, पुनः - again, दीयते - is given, च - and, परिक्लिष्टम् - reluctantly, तत् - that, दानम् - gift, राजसम् - Rajasic, स्मृतम् - is held to be.

21. And that gift which is given with a view to receive in return, or looking for fruit again, or reluctantly, is held to be Rajasic.

That which is given in charity with a hope of receiving in return some benefit, be it in any form, — perhaps in a different time-place-system—is of the passionate type. And also, a charity that is done reluctantly, not consciously, is of the same *Rajasic* type. In our everyday worldly activities, how many of our gifts escape to fall under this category?

The dull type of charity is being described now :

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।

असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥२२॥

22. *adesakale yad danam*
apatrebhyas ca diyate
asatkrtam avajnatam
tat tamasam udahrtam

अदेशकाले - At a wrong place and time, यत् - that, दानम् - gift, अपात्रेभ्यः - to unworthy persons,

च - and, दीयते - is given, असत्कृतम् - without respect, अवज्ञातम् - with insult, तत् - that, तामसं - Tamasic, उदाहृतम् - is declared to be.

22. The gift that is given at a wrong place and time, to unworthy persons, without respect or with insult, is declared to be Tamasic.

Gifts that are made not at the proper time, in the wrong place, to an unworthy person, without respect or with contempt, are charities of the dull-witted, and they are called the *Tamasika*.

Charity must come from within, as an expression of an irrepressible urge of one's own heart. Intelligent charity must spring from the abundance felt within the individual. He who feels impoverished by his giving has not done charity.

The following instructions are given with a view to perfect sacrifices, gifts, austerities, etc.:

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥२३॥

23. *aum tat sad iti nirdeso
brahmanas trividhah smrtah
brahmanas tena vedas ca
yajnas ca vihatah pura*

ॐ तत्सत्-Om Tat Sat, इति-thus, निर्देशः-de-signation, ब्रह्मणः-of Brahman, त्रिविधः-three fold

स्मृतः -has been declared, ब्राह्मणाः -Brahmanas, तेन -by that, वेदाः -Vedas, च-and, यज्ञाः -sacrifices, च-and, विहितः -created, पुरा-formerly.

23. “Om Tat Sat”: this has been declared to be the triple designation of Brahman. By that were created formerly, the Brahmanas, Vedas and sacrifices.

Om Tat Sat: This is being taught to be the triple designation (*Nirdesa*) of Brahman. A *Nirdesa* is generally given in ritualism, by performing which any defects in the sacred worship is removed. Each action, no doubt, has its fruit, but the fruit depends not only the external activity as such, but also on the purity of the intentions and motives, entertained by the performer. However diligent be the performance of sacred acts if the motive behind such acts is foul, they are rendered too ineffective to yield rich dividends. Actions performed by all of us, may put on an appearance of similarity, but the results thereof should vary from individual to individual according to their intentions.

The brilliance and glory of our intentions can be heightened by the remembrance of the Lord. Disassociation of oneself from one's matter envelopments is at once one's awakening to and identifying with the Lord. To the extent the sacred activity is self-less, to that extent its rewards are pure. To liquidate the ego, the individual must gain the consciousness of his spiritual status.

“*Om Tat Sat*” is a sentence of three words, each denoting one aspect of the Reality. *Om* represents the Transcendental and the Pure Self, Absolute and Unborn, which is the Infinite Substratum upon which the projections

of the mind, body and intellect are maintained. The term *Tat* is used in our scriptures to indicate the Eternal Goal, the Changeless and the Ever-perfect. In the famous grand declaration of the Veda "*Tatwamasi*", the term '*Tat*' indicates That from which everything has come, in which everything exists and into which everything merges back in the end. *Sat* means 'existence'. The principle of existence functioning through all things—perceived, felt, and thought of in our everyday life—is called *Sat*.

Thus to invoke the thoughts of "*Om*" which expresses the *transcendent* Absolute, or to invoke "*Tat*", the *universal* Truth or to cherish the concept of "*Sat*", the Reality, is to tune our instruments of action, and thereby chasten all our activities in the world outside.

This stanza has been subjected to great controversy. The explanations given, of this rather obscure passage, vary from commentator to commentator. Sri Sankaracharya prefaces his commentary on this stanza with the words: "The following instructions are given with a view to perfecting sacrifices, gifts and austerities. .", and the notes of Anandagiri add, "when acts of worship, gift and austerities are found defective, they may be perfected by uttering this three-fold designation of Brahman". One may wonder what exactly is the use of such a blind act of faith. "By this means", Sri Sankara explains, "even those acts that are not of a *Satwika*-type and are imperfect, are turned out to be *Satwika* and perfect."

The Eternal Reality indicated in the triple designation of Brahman "*Om Tat Sat*" is the Source from which all castes, the Vedas and the sacrifices proceed even at the time of creation. All super impositions can only rise from,

exist on and disappear into that which is their own substratum.

All human activities and endeavours can be classified under two heads (a) activities (*Ahara*) undertaken for the maintenance of the body and (b) activities (*Niyatha*) that nourish the culture constituted in all co-operative activities pursued in a dedication (*Yagna*), all charities (*Dana*) and all intelligent methods of self-control (*Tapas*).

When are we to use the term “ Om ” ?

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपः क्रियाः ।

प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥२४॥

24. *tasmad aum ity udahrtva
yajnanadanatapahkriyah
pravartante vidhanoktah
satatam brahmavadinam*

तस्मात्-Therefore, ॐ-Om, इति-thus, उदाहृत्य-uttering, यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः-the acts of sacrifice, gifts and austerity, प्रवर्तन्ते-begun, विधानोक्ताः-as enjoined in the scriptures, सततम्-always, ब्रह्मवादिनाम्-by the students of Brahman.

24. Therefore, with the utterance of ‘OM’ are the acts of sacrifice, gifts and austerity as enjoined in the scriptures, always begun by the students of Brahman.

The term *Om* is uttered while acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity, are undertaken by the followers of higher life. To cherish in our mind the divine awareness of the absolute

supremacy of the Infinite, as expressed in OM, is to add purpose and meaning to all our acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity. To invoke in our mind the divine concept of the Absolute is to free our personality from its limited fields of ego-centric attachments, and when a mind is thus liberated from its limitations it becomes more efficient at all austerities, more selfless in all *Yagnas*, and more liberal in all charities.

When is “Tat” used?

तदित्यनाभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपः क्रियाः ।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकांक्षिभिः ॥२५॥

25. *tad ity anabhisamdhaya*
phalam yajnatapahkriyah
danakriyas ca vividhah
kriyante moksakanksibhih

तत्-That, इति-thus, अनभिसन्धाय-without aiming at, फलम्-fruit, यज्ञतपःक्रियाः-acts of sacrifice and austerity, दानक्रियाः- acts of gift, च - and, विविधाः - various, क्रियन्ते - are performed, मोक्षकांक्षिभिः -by the seekers of liberation.

25. Uttering “Tat” without aiming at the fruits, are the acts of sacrifice and austerity and the various acts of gift performed by the seekers of liberation.

Those who are seekers of liberation: The modern man is in no sense of the term *physically* bound in society and, therefore, when this usual word “liberation” is read in philosophy often we fail to understand its special import in

Vedanta and come to wonder why we need any technique or method at all for our liberation! Sastra only prescribes a technique to liberate our "total personality" from our own physical appetites, emotional weaknesses and intellectual entanglements. A human personality so released, from its own cocoon of limitations, expands itself into its fuller and ampler stature, which is the Glory Divine. Such a liberation widens our horizon and takes us beyond the earthly tumults and sorrows which so readily reach to obsess us with their fatiguing restlessness.

He who is thus trying to "liberate" himself from his own attachments, selfish desires, self-centeredness, and the consequent agitations, should undertake to perform all his activities in such a way as the causes that generate these disturbances (*Vasanas*) in him are not thereby nourished, but deliberately extinguished. The stanza is providing a *tip* to the seekers on how this subtle result can be achieved through actions performed with right mental attitude.

With the utterance of the "*Tat*" alone, the acts of sacrifice and penance and that gift are undertaken by the seekers of freedom,* without entertaining any reward. *Tat* indicates, as we have already explained, the "universal Truth", and it declares "the oneness of all living creatures." To remember the large interests of the family is to forget our own self-interest; to work for the community is to obliterate our own family-interests; to work for the national redemption is to overlook the limited community benefits; and to work for the world and humanity is to sink our national interests. Thus, to work in the field of *yagna* or *tapas* or *dana* with a mind that is tuned up to *Tat*, "the

* Freedom from the limitations of personality.

universal oneness of the spiritual Truth,” is to work with no ego and, consequently, come to redeem ourselves from the thralldom of the flesh, from the limitations of matter.*

What is the significance of repeating Sat : what are its implications?

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥२६॥

26. *sadbhave sadhubhave ca
sad ity etat prayujyate
prasaste karmani tatha
sacchabdah partha yujyate*

सद्भावे—In the sense of reality, साधुभावे—in the sense of goodness, च—and, सत्—Tat, इति—thus, एतत्—this, प्रयुज्यते—is used, प्रशस्ते—auspicious, कर्मणि—in the (sense of) an act, तथा—so also, सत्—Sat, शब्दः – word, पार्थ—O Partha, युज्यते—is used.

26. The word “Sat” is used in the sense of reality and of goodness; and so also, O Partha, the word “Sat” is used in the sense of an auspicious act.

The *Sat* is used to mean both *reality* and *goodness*. It is also used for all praiseworthy actions. In our everybody contact with the world we are living in a realm of *relative reality* and a seeker is apt to take the world perceived, felt and thought of—through the play of his body, mind and

* The existing Vasanas exhaust and no new Vasanas are created—
Chapter-III.

intellect equipments—as *absolutely real*. Therefore the term *Sat* is often used to remind us that all these relative realities have the self-same substratum, *Sat*, the Absolute Reality.

The use of the designation Sat of Brahman is given as follows :

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवामिधीयते ॥२७॥

27. *yajne tapasi dane ca
sthitih sad iti co cyate
karma cai va tadarthiyam
sad ity eva bhidhiyate*

यज्ञे—In sacrifice, तपसि—in austerity, दाने—in gift, च—and, स्थितिः—steadiness, सत्—*Sat*, इति—thus, च—and, उच्यते—is called, कर्म—action, च—and, एव—also, तदर्थीयम्—in connection with these or for the sake of the supreme, सत्—*Sat*, इति—thus, एव—even, अभिधीयते—is called.

27. Steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and gift is also called “*Sat*” and, also action in connection with these (for the sake of the Supreme) is called *Sat*.

The term *Sat* is used to indicate a man’s faith and devotion, in sacrifice, austerity and gift. Thus *Sat* registers one’s faith in the principles underlying *Yagna*, *Dana* and

† Read Swamiji’s Discourses on Mandokya and Karika...Chapter II. The Illusoriness of the Pluralistic perceptions..... also in Geeta Chapter II

Tapas and also in his various acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity.

In Short, even acts of sacrifice and austerity when ~~they~~ are not of the *Sattwic-type* can be rendered "good", when they are pursued with this required inner attunement which is gained by invoking in the performer's bosom the concept of—the Supreme (OM), the Universal (*Tat*), and the Real (*Sat*)—the Infinite Brahman. If these chantings are undertaken with faith and sincerity the seeker's mind expands from all its selfishness and arrogance. Ego and ego-centric desires bring about attachment which, in its turn, destroys the freedom of the individual to grow out luxuriously into the ampler field of joy of the Spirit.

To cut off these shackles, which were made while at the fields of activity, we have to again re-enter the very "realm of action" and persuade ourselves to perform such 'right' *Karmas* as to liquidate the bad reactions (*Karma-Phal*), of the past 'wrong' actions.* This unwinding of the *Vasanas* can be effected only in the field of activity, the very field where we did the winding. Thus, activities are the very creators of our psychological imperfections, and it is the very same *Karmas* that are to change the texture of our nature. This is accomplished by an intelligent right adjustment of our mental attitude when we are at work. The required changes are brought about by the remembrance of the Infinite Reality as indicated by the three terms "*OM TAT SAT*". The principle is, that the actions can leave

* Right and wrong: those actions which leave behind in our mind a storm of regrets are called "wrong" and those which leave behind a great peace and sense of fulfilment, are classified as "right".

behind only such reactions as ordered by the type of motive and attitude within the performer.

All these acts become perfect only when done in full faith: therefore :

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असादित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥२८॥

28. *asraddhaya hutam dattam
tapas taptam kriam ca yat
asad ity ucyate partha
na ca tat pretya no iha*

अश्रद्धया-Without faith, हुतम्-is sacrificed, दत्तम्-
-given, तपः-austerity, तप्तम्-is practised, कृतम्-
performed, च-and, यत्-whatever, असत्-Asat, इति-
thus, उच्यते-is called, पार्थ-O Partha, न-not, च-
and, तत्-that, प्रेत्य-here-after, (after death), न-
not, इह-here.

28. Whatever is sacrificed, given or performed, and
whatever austerity is practised without faith, it
is called “*Asat*”, O Partha; it is naught here
or hereafter (after death).

In this thundering negative statement, we have an
indication that faith is man, and an individual without
faith, even if he performs a most glorious act “*it is not for
hereafter or here*”. Action can create only effects ordered
by the ardour of faith and conviction in the performer:
together indicated here as ‘steadfastness’ (*Sthiti*). The
intellectual values entertained by the seeker will supply the

glow in his actions, and since the results of his actions always depend upon the sincerity and ardour with which the actions are undertaken, the good or the bad effects of his actions directly depend upon the strength of faith with which the actions are undertaken or performed. Herein we have a conclusive statement that whatever sacrifice is made, whatever penance is performed or whatever charity is given, it is called '*Asat*', if they are undertaken 'without faith'. Unreal or the non-existence in Sanskrit is called *Asat*. From the unreal nothing Real can ever emerge out ; from the unreal activity, no real result can come. Therefore, devoted actions, spiritual or religious, when undertaken *without faith* they fail to produce any result. By so saying, the Lord is indicating that the spirit of *śradha* is unavoidable and that without it no progress or evolution can ever take place.

Hereafter : It is not only in the realms of spirit that this law holds good, but even in the material world of our day-to-day activities this is the unique, unquestionable, rule of life. Without faith, no one can come to shine in any field of activity. No one can hope to gather any profit at all out of any activity, when the individual has no faith in himself. Both in the secular activities of the market-place and in the sacred performances of religion, the factor that determines the quality and quantity of the result is our *faith* in our own efficiency and goodness, and in our *faith* in the field of our activity.

Such acts when performed without faith become barren—Asat—says Lord Krishna.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन संवादे श्रद्धात्रयविभाग-
योगो नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Om Tat Sat ity srimad bhagavadgitasupanisatsu
brahmavidyayam yogasastre sri krishnarjuna-
samvade sraddhatrayavibhagayogo
nama saptadaso dhyayah.*

Om Tat Sat. Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Gita, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the sixteenth discourse ends entitled :

THE THREEFOLD FAITH.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER XVIII

Geeta is a piece of art of strange beauties and it stands apart from everything else as a class by itself. It is liquid poetry, expounding solid philosophy. In the fluidity of its metre it crystallises some of the rarest gems of moral and spiritual value. Its breezy discourses have a solid style. The fluidity of its eloquence cataracts down upon every broken personality, making him whole by its magic touch. It is not a book of science, and yet, it is very scientific in its approach to the theme. It has not the airy nothingness of the familiar philosophical discourses, and yet, all philosophies seem to meet within its ample stretch.

It is the duty of science to *describe* life; it is the purpose of philosophy to *explain* life. Science describes the natural structures and processes; philosophy attempts at their explanation. Thus viewed, Bhagavad Geeta is an enchanting impossibility; it is at once a science and a philosophy, and yet, strangely enough, it is neither a scientific philosophy nor a philosophical science. In its eighteen

chapters, it explains a philosophy of living, and, while doing so, it expounds and demonstrates the science of living.

When such a perfect combination of both science and philosophy is sung to the melody of Perfection, that Krishna was, we have in this piece of work an appeal both to the head and to the heart. This is, perhaps, the secret charm of the Lord's Song* that had enthralled generations, from the day of its production, some three thousand years before Christ.†

This closing chapter of the Geeta is in fact a summary of the entire Song of the Lord. If the second chapter, as we found earlier, is a summary of the Geeta in anticipation, the eighteenth chapter is a report on the Geeta in retrospect. It was already proved that everywhere the one Eternal Spirit functions through matter and comes to express Itself in this pluralistic world of phenomenon. The multiple world of plurality is extremely variegated: in the nature, behaviour and quality of the individuals, variations in thousands of shades are noticed.

It was explained exhaustively and in almost all the chapters there was some mention of this, that the distinctions are depending upon the temperaments that predominate in each one's personality-composition. On the basis of these temperaments Geeta indicated three types of personalities: the Good (*Sattwic*), the Passionate (*Rajasic*)

* Bhagavat Geeta.

† Serious students who had been so far following these discourses very carefully, would do well now, to go back to the beginning of the text and kindly read the "introduction" that is given at the opening of each of the preceding seventeen chapters.

and the Dull (*Tamasic*). In this chapter we have an elaborate and exhaustive discussion on how these three temperaments in their variations create differences in the capacity to sacrifice, in the wisdom, in actions, fortitude and happiness, from individual to individual.

Also very often in Geeta two familiar terms, "renunciation" (*Sannyas*) and "abandonment" (*Tyaga*) were used in different contexts with seemingly different emphasis. The terms have to be re-defined in order to remove all confusions. Ambiguity in science is dangerous. The chapter opens with a thorough investigation into the meaning and content of these two terms—*Sannyas* and *Tyaga*.

This Chapter opens with a direct question from Arjuna 'what constitutes "renunciation" and what are the contents of "abandonment"?' Lord Krishna takes up the theme and starts defining these two terms; "but", some students of Geeta complain, "the Geetacharya has drifted away into a rambling discourse on various other topics unconnected with the main question." In fact, this is no fair criticism. Having defined what is *Sannyas*, Lord explains *Tyaga* and shows how through the latter alone the former can be achieved and fully lived. Unless we discover in ourselves the capacity to abandon from our mind its various unhealthy relationships with the world outside and re-educate it to be continuously vigilant and alert to live in that healthy intelligent spirit of detachment (*Tyaga*), the total withering away of the false-ego and its endless desire-promptings, *Sannyasa*, can never be achieved. Abandonment is the true contents of the status of renunciation: *Sannyasa* without *Tyaga*-spirit is but an empty show; it is a false-crown with no kingdom of joy within for it to lord over!

The endless details given herein, minute and true-to-life, analysing and classifying the tendencies, urges, emotions, actions, etc., are all pointers that help each one to understand oneself. They are as many "metres" on the "dash-board" of our bosom within, which give us by their indications a true picture of the conditions of the personality-mechanism working within us. Just as a driver of a machine can understand the conditions of the engine and its nature of performance by watching the play of the "needless" on the metres of the board in front of him—heat, pressure, oil, charge, speed, fuel, mileage, ignition and what not, a seeker is asked to check up at these definite pointers and note their readings. If all are indicating the safe-sign, *Sattwic*, a smooth life of maximum efficiency and definite progress in cultural evolution is promised. If we can classify ourselves in our tendencies and actions only as *Rajasic* we are advised to take note of it and be cautious. If the tendencies declare a definite *Tamasic* temperament, better halt the vehicle and attend to the *engine*. This seems to be the advice of this concluding Chapter.

The giving up of these lower impulses of the Passionate (*Rajasic*) and the Dull (*Tamasic*) in our moment-to moment contacts with life is "abandonment" which will give us sufficient mastery over ourselves to ultimately give up the very ego-centre which causes all these deflections. And this final giving up of the perception of the finite in the acquired wisdom of the Infinite is the fulfilment of life, indicated here by the term "Renunciation".

CHAPTER XVIII

अथ अष्टादशोऽध्यायः

अर्जुन उवाच

संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।

त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥१॥

Arjuna Uvaca

*I. samnyasasya mahabaho
tattvam icchami veditum
tyagasya ca hrsikesa
prthak kesinisudana*

संन्यासस्य—Of renunciation, महाबाहो—O mighty-armed, तत्त्वम्—the essence or truth, इच्छामि—(I) wish, वेदितुम्—to know, त्यागस्य—of Tyaga or abandonment, च—and, हृषीकेश—O Hrishiksha, पृथक्—severally, केशिनिषूदन—slayer of Keshi

Arjuna Said :

1. I desire to know severally, O mighty-armed, the essence or truth of renunciation, O Hrishiksha, as also of *Tyaga* or abandonment, O slayer of Keshi. (Krishna)

The chapter begins with Arjuna's question demanding of Lord Krishna the precise definition and an exhaustive

explanation of the two terms used by the Lord in the Geeta off and on, here and there. The renunciation (*Sannyasa*) and abandonment (*Tyaga*) are the two technical terms used more than once in the Geeta. Though the question is asked in a spirit of academic interest, Krishna takes up the question in all seriousness and is answering it exhaustively here. When a disciple expresses his doubts, invariably he must fail to express his exact difficulty! However, it is the duty of the teacher to discover the difficulties of the student and clear his doubt completely. The Lord of the Geeta takes up this problem and is explaining it exhaustively.

The logic of the entire chapter revolves round the meanings of “renunciation” and “abandonment”. *Sannyasa* without the spirit of *Tyaga* is incomprehensible and if at all it is ever so practised, it can only be a sham pose. The bulk of the chapter maps out the tendencies, urges, impulses, and motives that are to be abandoned so that true renunciation of the undivine personality can effectively take place. We must read the chapter in this spirit, or else it will fail to influence us surely.

Slayer of Keshin (*Keshinishudana*) : Keshin was a Daithya who attacked Krishna in the form of a horse. Krishna killed him by tearing him off into two halves. Hence this name to Krishna.

Defining these terms and indicating the entire significance of their connotations, Krishna says :

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥२॥

Sri Bhagavan Uvaca

2. *kamjanam karmanam nyasam*
samnyasam kayayo viduh
savakarmaphalatyagam
prahus tyagam vicaksanah

काश्यानाम्-(Of) desireful, कर्मणाम्-of actions,
न्यासम्-the renunciation, सन्यासम्- renunciation,
कवयः- the sages, विदुः- understand, सर्वकर्मफल-
त्यागम्-the abandonment of the fruits of all works
प्राहुः- declare, त्यागम्-abandonment, विचक्षणाः-the
wise.

The Blessed Lord Said :

2. The sages understand “Sannyasa ” to be the renunciation of works with desire ; the wise declare “ the abandonment of the fruits of all actions ” as *Tyaga*.

Totally giving up all desire-prompted activities is “renunciation” and “abandonment” is giving up of the fruits-of-action. As they stand, both of them read almost the same to the uninitiated ; for, all desires are always for the fruits of our actions. Thus “renouncing desire-motivated activity” and “renouncing our anxiety to enjoy the fruit” would both read the same to those who see only their superficial suggestions. No doubt, both mean giving up of desire, but *Tyaga* is something slightly different from *Sannyasa* : and yet, “abandonment” has an integral relationship with “renunciation”. Action is an effort put forth in the present, which, in its own time, will, it is hoped,

fulfil itself into the desired fruit. And, the fruit is what we reap later on as a result of the present action. A desire-prompted-action as such belongs to the *present*, while the anxiety to enjoy the fruit is a disturbance of our mind regarding a *future* period of time. The fruit comes after the action ; the fruit is the culmination of an action undertaken in the present.

Desire and agitations bring about restlessness, and deeper the desire, greater is the amount of dissipation of our energies within. Such a dissipated man cannot execute any piece of work with steady efficiency or true ardour. Also, it is to be noticed, desire is always ordered by the ego. Elimination of ego is at once the sublimation of the individuality and the ascendancy of the individual from the lower realms of consciousness to the uppermost strata of the effulgent universal Awareness, the One Eternal God.

The tragedy of life becomes complete if a desire-ridden individual comes under the endless persecution of his steady anxiety to enjoy the fruits of his actions. Fruits of actions belong to the future and it is always ordered by the quality and quantity of the action in the present moment and also by the circumstances available in the chosen field. Naturally, without the "abandonment" (*Tyaga*) of our clinging attachment to the expected fruits of our actions we will not discover the full potentialities of our own personality. Without this, our activities will become naturally inefficient, and inefficient activities can never provide for us any enjoyable fruits.

In short "renunciation" is the goal to be reached through the process of "abandonment" of our moment-to-moment anxiety to come to enjoy the fruits.

Both *Sannyasa* and *Tyaga* are disciplines in our activities. Krishna is never tired of emphasising the importance of work. Neither of these terms indicates that work should be ignored ; on the other hand both of them insist that work we must. And work, however can be given a total transformation by removing those things that clog the efficiency of our undertaking, and thus making every piece of work yield its fullest rewards. Clipping off the chains that shackle us with the past and the future, to work—without being hustled by anxieties or being henpecked by desire—to work in full freedom and inspiration in the present is the noblest way of supreme action. To a large extent we can say that the definition of these two terms in the Geeta is a trace, more broad minded and tolerant than the implications of these two words as we read in the Vedic lore.

Should the ignorant perform work or not ?

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥३॥

3. *tyajyam dosavad ity eke*
karma prahur manisinah
yajnanadanatapahkarma
na tyajyam iti ca pare

त्याज्यम्—Should be abandoned, दोषवत्—(full of) as an evil, इति—thus, एके—some, कर्म—action, प्राहुः—declare, मनीषिणः—philosophers, यज्ञदानतपःकर्म—acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity, न—not, त्याज्यम्—should be relinquished, इति—thus, च—and, अपरे—others.

3. That action should be abandoned as an evil, declare some philosophers ; while others (declare) that acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished.

In the previous stanza it was conclusively declared that abandonment is the “way” and total renunciation is the “goal”. On this theory of abandonment there is a school of philosophers, Sankyas, who declare, “*action should be abandoned as an evil*”. According to them, all actions are productive of *vasanas* which would cloud the realisation of the Self and, therefore, without exceptions all actions should be renounced. Some commentators upon the Sankyan philosophy point out that “work is *not to be abandoned, except when it is going in wrong channels*, motivated by demoniac urges like passion, greed, desire, etc.”

The philosophers not only indicate that all seekers should avoid unhealthy activities which have, in their reactions, a deadening influence upon the spiritual beauty in man, but also they, at once, advise that every man should engage himself in self-creative, character-moulding, moral-rebuilding work that can add to the individual integration and personality. This latter school of thinkers recommend that sacrifice, (*Yagna*), charity (*Dana*) and austerity (*Tapas*) should never be abandoned.

Sri Sankaracharya, however, wants to read his pet doctrine in these lines and almost with a reckless daring tries to twist and squeeze the stanza to bring his particular meaning out of it. Sankara says that this is applicable only to those who practise the “Yoga of Action” (*Karma-Yoga*), while for those who have reached the Stage of Knowledge (*Gyani*) “complete abandonment of all works is imperative.”

This twist is considered as unnatural and unnecessary by many of his critics. As students of Geeta we should know that Krishna wants Arjuna only to renounce all evil activities and pursue the spiritual practices, and worldly work, in a spirit of dedicated selfless devotion. Krishna's Geeta calls upon man to make work itself as the greatest homage unto the Supreme.

The Lord's decree is this that ignorant should perform work. Now, as to these divergent views :

निश्चयं शृणु मे तत्र त्यागे भरतसत्तम ।

त्यागो हि पुरुषव्याघ्र त्रिविधः संप्रकीर्तितः ॥४॥

4. *niscayam srnu me tatra
tyaga bharatasattama
tyago hi purusavyaghra
trividhah samprakirtitah*

निश्चयम्—Conclusion or the final truth, शृणु—hear, मे—my, तत्र—there, त्यागे—about abandonment, भरतसत्तम—O best of the Bharatas, त्यागः—abandonment, हि—verily, पुरुषव्याघ्र—O best of men, त्रिविधः—of three kinds, संप्रकीर्तितः—has been declared (to be).

4. Hear from Me the conclusion or the final truth about this “abandonment”, O best of the Bharatas; “abandonment”, verily, O best of men, has been declared to be of three kinds.

Lord Krishna is now promising Arjuna that he will scientifically explain what constitutes *Tyaga* and under what all headings, this spirit of abandonment can be brought.

The discussion here is not merely an indulgent literary curiosity, but it is a definite technique to be practised and followed. For a mortal mind *giving up* is no easy task ; acquisition and aggrandisement are the very life-breath of man's mind. Naturally, therefore, Krishna has to invoke in Arjuna the best in him which is done by addressing him as the "best among Bharathas" (*Bharata-sreshta*) and as a "tiger among men" (*Purusha-Vyaghra*).

"Abandonment" (*Tyaga*), for purposes of study and understanding, is three-fold. All through Geeta this three-fold classification was followed, and everywhere we find that it is a division under the pure (*Sattwic*), the passionate (*Rajasic*) and the dull (*Tamasic*). However, Sri Ramanuja divides "abandonment" into (1) abandonment of fruit, (2) abandonment of the idea that Self is an agent and, therefore, giving up of all attachments, and (3) abandonment of the 'actor-sense' in the realisation that the Lord is the author of all actions. This again is an example of how *Acharyas*, wedded to their pet doctrines, come to squeeze out their own meanings, and the result was this that the smooth stanzas get bulged out of all proportions of beauty to become positively ugly.

What is the decree then? The Lord says :

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥५॥

5. *yajnanadanatapahkarma*
na tyajyam karyam eva tat
yajno danam tapas cai va
pavanani manisinam

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म - Acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity, न - not, त्याज्यम् - should be abandoned, कार्यम् - should be performed, एव - indeed, तत् - that, यज्ञः - (worship) sacrifice, दानम् - gift, तपः - austerity, च - and, एव - indeed, पावनानि - purifiers, मनीषिणाम् - of the wise.

5. Acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed; worship, charity and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise.

What has been said earlier has been accepted and emphasised. Practice of worship, charity and austerity should not be abandoned. We have already found in the previous chapter that these bring about, when properly pursued, a brilliant discipline within and create conditions under which alone the highest spiritual unfoldment and final experience of the Infinite are possible. Krishna says, here that these can "purify thoughtful men". Men of evolutionary tendencies, who seek freedom from their personality-obsessions must with devotion and right attitude of mind perform *Yagna*, *Dana* and *Tapa*. They can discover thereby an endless amount of inner peace and balance.

Obligatory works should be performed without attachment :

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥६॥

6. *etany api tu karmani*
sangam tyaktva phalani ca
kartavyani ti me partha
niscitam matam uttamam

एतानि—These, अपि—even, तु—but, कर्माणि—actions, संगम्—attachment, त्यक्त्वा—leaving, फलानि—fruits, च—and, कर्तव्यानि—should be performed, इति—thus, मे—my, पार्थ—O Partha, निश्चितम्—certain, मतम्—belief, उत्तमम्—best.

6. But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the fruits, O Partha ; this is my certain and best belief.

Even these actions, meaning Sacrifice (*Yagna*), Charity (*Dana*) and Austerity (*Tapas*) should be performed “*leaving attachments and fruits*”. The term “attachment” in Geeta has a peculiar flavour, and throughout its length, this term has been used to indicate the spirit in which an ego-centric personality will come to work in any field of activity, while fulfilling his own ego-centric desires. Thus, ego and its desires are the component part of attachments. When an ego strives to fulfil its own burning desires, it comes to live in a certain relationship with the world of things and objects around,—this wrong relationship is called “attachment”.

Once an individual starts working under the poison of “attachment” he comes to entertain an unintelligent, self-destructive anxiety to gain and enjoy the results of his actions. Long before the actions themselves are completed, one’s hope and hunger for their fruits can present themselves

to weave a charm of their own, benumbing one's efficiency in the action undertaken.

The idea that charity, sacrifice and austerity must be performed in an attitude of "detachment", "renouncing all anxieties for the enjoyment of the fruits" is, Krishna admits, his own personal opinion: (*matam*). Here, in the Geetha, it is not, however purely an original Krishna-Creed, but it is perfectly in line with the technique of selflessness as advised in all the Hindu scriptures. Most probably Krishna is now confident that for Arjuna, the new convert, the Lord Himself is more authoritative than the old Rishies. Therefore, to bless his devotee, Krishna says that He is the author of this opinion.

To be rid of attachment and to be free from anxieties regarding the fruits that are yet to present themselves as a reward for the work now undertaken in the present, are the main limbs of the Krishna Creed in the Geeta. To live this Krishna-way of action is to assure for ourselves a healthy inner equipment, which can tenderly guide us into the peaks of the Supermanhood. The loving term used here by Krishna in addressing Arjuna has its own appeal to the Prince. It recommends to him the Krishna-theory of "abandonment" (*Tyaga*) as explained in this stanza.

Therefore for a seeker of spiritual liberation work is unavoidable and with a proper spirit of Tyaga, work can help him on his path. The Tamasic Tyaga is :

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥७॥

7. *niyatasya tu samnyasah
karmano no papadyate
mohat tasya parityagas
tamasah parikirtitah*

नियतस्य—Obligatory, तु—verily, संन्यासः—renun-
ciation, कर्मणः—of action, न—not, उपपद्यते—is proper
मोहात्—from delusion, तस्य—of the same, परित्यागः—
abandonment, तामसः—Tamasic, परिकीर्तितः— is
declared.

7. Verily, the renunciation of “obligatory actions”
is not proper; the abandonment of the same
from delusion is declared to be *Tamasic* (Dull).

Abandonment of obligatory duties is considered by the
Lord as the lowest and the darkest. Every individual has
his own obligations to himself and to others in the society.
They include both the unavoidable *daily duties*, as well as
the *special duties* that arise on special occasions in the life
of an individual, and in the society of the times. There-
fore, so long as an individual is a member of a living society,
enjoying the social life, demanding protection and profit
from society, he has no right, according to the Hindu code
of living, to abandon his obligatory rights.

Even if one abandons one’s moral duties in ignorance
one is not excused, for, as in the civil laws of the modern
world and in the material laws of the physical world, so in
the spiritual kingdom also, “ignorance of law is no excuse”.
Out of ignorance, and lack of proper thinking, if an indi-
vidual ignores his obligations and refuses to serve the world

he is living in, that abandonment is considered as dull (*tamasic*).

The Rajasic Tyaga is :

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥८॥

8. *duhkham ity eva yat karma
kayaklesabhayat tyajet
sa krtva rajasam tyagam
nai va tyagaphalam labhet*

दुःखम्—(It is) painful, इति—thus, एव—even, यत्—which, कर्म—action, कायक्लेशभयात्—from fear of bodily trouble, त्यजेत्—abandons, सः – he, कृत्वा—performing, राजसम्—Rajasic, त्यागम्—abandonment, न—not, एव—even, त्यागफलम्—the fruit of abandonment, लभेत्—obtains.

8. He who, from fear of bodily trouble, abandons action, because it is painful, thus performing a *Rajasic* (Passionate) abandonment, obtains not the fruit of “abandonment”.

Some may come to give up his individual obligatory duties “because they are painful” or “through fear of bodily suffering”. The relinquishment thus practised falls under the “passionate” type (*Rajasic*). This clearly shows in its unsaid suggestions that a man of action and passion (*Rajasic*) will be readily undertaking to act and fulfil his obligatory duties if they are not painful, and if they are not too fatiguing. To become a man of action, fulfilling all obliga-

tions and performing all duties without sacrificing one's own personal comforts, is no great heroism at all. Such actions have no special reward. In fact, Krishna says “*he shall attain no fruit whatever of his tyaga*”.

Performing one's obligatory duties itself is the most glorious of all forms of ‘*Tyaga*’, and it can be considered doubly so, only when it involves a certain amount of sacrifice of one's own personal convenience, and bodily comfort. Arjuna himself was hesitating to fight the battle in order to avoid his obligatory duty. Arjuna's relinquishment of duty as contemplated by him can be considered as falling under this category of *Rajasic Tyaga*.

Real abandonment should always lead us on to ampler fields of self-expression in the fuller ways of living and to the greater experiences of joy. A bud abandons itself to become a flower: the flower gives up its soft petals and its enchanting fragrance and gains for itself the richer status of a fruit. Every real abandonment should haul us up to a nobler status of fuller contents.

What then is the Sattwic abandonment?

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

सङ्गत्यक्त्वा फलंचैवसत्यागः सात्त्विकोमतः ॥९॥

9. *karyam ity eva yat karma*

niyatam kriyate rjuna

sangam tyaktva phalam cai va

sa tyagah sattviko matah

कार्यम्—Ought to be done, इति—Thus, एव—even,
यत्—which, कर्म—action, नियतम्—obligatory, क्रियते—is

performed, अर्जुन - O Arjuna, संगम्-attachment, त्यक्त्वा-abandoning, फलम्-fruits, च-and, एव-even, स-that, त्यागः - abandonment, सात्त्विकः - Sattvic (pure), मतः-is regarded.

9. Whatever "obligatory action" is done, O Arjuna, merely because it ought to be done abandoning "attachment and also fruit", that abandonment is regarded as *Sattvic* (pure).

Those who execute thoroughly all their obligatory duties, because "they are to be done" (*karyamiti*), because it is almost death to them to remain without accomplishing them—fall under the *Sattvic* (Pure) variety. They come to believe that certain acts of relinquishment must be done, for, otherwise, according to them, it is just insufferably indecent. Such persons under these inspiring ideas when they come to serve the community, or work in any field, they provide us with examples of the *Sattvic* type of relinquishment.

Activities have certain unavoidable encumbrances. All that the Lord says in the Geeta amounts only to this that we must act on without these encumbrances curtailing and limiting our freedom of action. Thus, the *tyaga* of the good (sattvic) or real *tyaga* means: "doing action with a certain correct mental attitude". This may read strange, but those who have carefully gone through these three stanzas, explaining the true type of *tyaga*, must have understood that all these discussions were not so much on what is to be relinquished as to how and in which field one must act. In short, Lord Krishna's concept of *tyaga* condemns abandonment of the world and our duties in it. *Tyaga* to the Lord

in the Geeta is a subjective-renunciation of every selfishness and desire, which limit the freedom of the individual in his field of activity. It is something like the abandonment that everyone practises in his dining room: renunciation of hunger by positively taking in the food !!

These are the sensitive touches that raise the status of the Geeta as a philosophical art-piece which has at many points improved upon the philosophy of the Upanishads as was then understood by the Arjuna generation. Not that the Geeta has contributed any new theory or creed, but in its outright matter-of-fact, down-to-the-earth, practical discussions it has made the old ideas of the Upanishads re-live, groomed and re-dressed to suit the fashion of thought in the modern times.

In these three stanzas the abandonment (*tyaga*) discussed is not “the abandonment of actions” but “abandonment of such things within our subjective personality that block the free flow of our own possibilities”: *tyaga* makes an active man, a more potential worker in the world.

Acting in the world outside, renouncing both the ego and the ego-centric desires, an individual comes to exhaust his existing *vasanas*, and to gain in his inward purity.

How does such a pure man, purified through Sattwic Tyaga, comes to gain the highest spiritual experience?

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥१०॥

10. *na dvesty akusalam karma*
kusale na nusajjate
tyagi sattvasamavisto
medhavi chinnasamsayah

न-Not, द्वेष्टि-hates, अकुशलम्-disagreeable, कर्म-action, कुशले-to an agreeable one, न-not, अनुषज्जते-is attached, त्यागी-the abandoner, सत्त्वसमाविष्टः - pervaded by purity, मेधावी-intelligent, छिन्नसंशयः - with his doubts cut asunder.

The previous stanza would at the outset look as an impossible thesis to any strong man of action and adventure. The Royal heart of Arjuna could not, perhaps, comprehend such a person who fulfils his obligatory duty "only because it ought to be done" (*karyam-iti*) "renouncing attachment and fruit". As though answering the look of surprise on Arjuna's face, which faithfully registers his failure to appreciate the idea, Krishna gives in this stanza a more elaborate picture of such an individual.

A man established in *Sattwic* abandonment does never come to hate, does never feel attached: hates only the undignified acts of service, and gets attached only with agreeable fields. He is not miserable in disagreeable environments nor does he get terribly attached to the circumstances and scheme-of-things which are agreeable to his taste and joy. He does his duties under all circumstances, agreeable or disagreeable, without feeling elated when he finds himself on the "peaks", or feeling dejected when he discovers himself in the "pits" of life.

He is overwhelmed neither by extreme joy nor by extreme sorrow; equanimity becomes his essential nature. He stands as a rock, ever at his ease and watches with an unbroken balance-of-vision the waves of happening rising and falling all around him at all times. He is, in short,

independent of the chronological happenings in the outer world around him.

When to such a man of *Sattwic-tyaga*, impulses such as jealousy, anger, passion, greed, etc., come, he does not get himself involved in those impulses, as we do in our attachments and identifications with them. That is, a man of abandonment (*Tyaga*) readily discovers in himself a secret faculty to abandon his identification with the false, lower-instincts in himself. He does not become a victim of his own mental-impressions (*vasanas*); he stands apart from the tumults of his mind.

Such a man is said to be an educated and a cultured one. An uncultured man is like a dry leaf, being tossed hither and thither, by every passing breeze : such a person is like a reed upon the bosom of the sea, rising and falling in the mad revelry of the tireless waves. It is the privilege of the animal alone to get faithfully coloured by its own instincts and act ever to the tune of its impulses. It is only man, the inheritor of an intellect, that can come to enquire into the nature of the rising waves of impulses, judge them in the light of the ideal he holds on in himself, and, if need be, to stand apart from them and allow them to die away.

But ordinarily an individual finds it impossible to stand apart and live to act independent of his impulses. According to the Geeta, this is because man has allowed his faculty of abandonment (*Tyaga*) to die away in him. A *Tyagi* is he who has cultivated this habit to live intelligently in life, practising from moment to moment, the abandonment of all the animal whisperings in himself, and follow diligently the Melody of the Soul. Such a man is established in *Sattwic Tyaga*.

In order that one may come to judge correctly and renounce the false, one must have a very clear and steady picture of the Perfect in oneself. *Medha-sakthi* is not merely the intellect's power of understanding or reasoning but it is the intellect's *faculty to memorise and retain things*. A cultured man of unbroken equipoise and steady understanding must have a constant memory of (1) the constituents of the field of his activity, (2) the instruments through which he contacts the world outside, (3) his own essential infinitely divine nature, and (4) his exact relationship with the world-of-objects when he is contacting them through his instruments. Such a person is called *Medhavi*, "a man of firm understanding." And in case his knowledge be spotted with patches of doubts or slightly poisoned by traces of false-knowledge, there will be in him endless confusions, which in their turn will bring about wrong judgements. Therefore, Krishna indicates that a man of *Sattwic Tyaga* is one whose "*doubt is cleft*".

The highest type of *Tyaga* is not, perhaps, abundantly found except in a minority who have accomplished their detachments completely from all their matter vestures. But to the lay majority, identification with the body-mind-intellect-equipment is so natural that they have the sense of *agency* and come to live in the world conditioned by the happenings around. Such an average man, who works with an ego and attachment must learn to work at least, renouncing the fruit.

Krishna explains :

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।

यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥११॥

11. *na hi dehabhrta sakyam
tyaktum karmany asesatah
yas tu karmaphalatyagi
sa tyagi ty abhidhiyate*

न-Not, हि-verily, देहभृता-by an embodied being, शक्यम्-possible, त्यक्तुम्-to abandon, कर्माणि-actions, अशेषतः-entirely, यः-who, तु-but, कर्मफल-त्यागी-relinquisher of the fruits of actions, सः-he, त्यागी-relinquisher, इति-thus, अभिधीयते-is called.

11. Verily, it is not possible for an embodied being to abandon actions entirely; but he who relinquished "the fruits of actions" is verily called a relinquisher (*Tyagi*).

To the rough and ready intellect in Arjuna the easier method seems to be to escape all chances for the impulses to act, and thus in one sweep, renouncing altogether the contentious world, run to the jungle and live there in equanimity!! The stanza now under review warns us against such a false conclusion. Actions we will have to do. Without action no living organism can continue living. Existence itself is the manifestation of life in activities. To remain without doing anything is itself an action and the physiological and psychological actions continue till the grave. Anything that has a body, even a unicellular organism, can never hope to abandon *all* activities. Actions constitute the insignia of life. It is the fragrance in the flower of existence. Where there is no action, life has ended, existence has withered away.....purpose has dried up.....stinking death has come!!

Since all of us are embodied and, therefore, cannot abandon all activities so long as we live in this body, the

only choice left for us is to direct and discipline all our actions in such a way as we may thereby bring a harmony into our inner life lived, and a dynamic rhythm into our outer duties performed.

If *Tyaga* of the *Sattwic* type is not possible for all of us, due to our attachments in the world of matter, certainly we can practise the abandonment of our clinging attachments and anxieties for the fruits of our actions. Action cannot be completely abandoned by one who is conditioned by the gross, subtle and causal bodies. Such an individual—and majority of us at this stage of our evolution fall under this category—is advised by Krishna to abandon his anxiety to enjoy the fruits of his actions, which are yet to come in a future period of time, and act diligently, entirely, and enthusiastically. A man who abandons thus the thirst to enjoy the fruits of his action is called a *Tyagi*.

Now what is the benefit which comes from Tyaga of an action?—the Lord says :

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।

भवत्यत्यागिनांप्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥१२॥

12. *anistam istam misram ca*
trividham karmanah phalam
bhavaty atyaginam pretya
na tu samnyasinam kvacit

अनिष्टम्—Unwished or disagreeable or evil,
इष्टम्—wished or agreeable or good, मिश्रम्—mixed,
च—and, त्रिविधम्—threefold, कर्मणः—of action, फलम्—
fruit, भवति—accrues, अत्यागिनाम्—to non-abandoners

प्रेत्य-after death, न-not, तु-but, संन्यासिनाम् - to abandoners, क्वचित्-ever.

12. The threefold fruit of action, evil, good and mixed accrues after death to those who have no spirit of abandonment, but never to abandoners.

The results of all actions depend, it is said, upon the quality of the action. Abandonment (*Tyaga*) has been already described as belonging to three different categories. Here we have a discussion of the different types of re-action that would accrue when the different types of *Tyaga* are practised.

Projection of a wilful desire in the world outside is an action, and according to the purity of the motive and the serenity of composure of the actor a psychological re-action is left behind at the end of every activity. Mind has got an instructive habit of repeating itself. Future thoughts faithfully follow the footprints left by the past thoughts. Thus, actions in the world determine the "thought tendencies" of the human mind, and those tendencies (*Vasanas*) condition the mental equipment and order our reactions to the things that are happening around. The fruit-of-action in philosophy is not only its manifested results in the material world, but also the subtle constitutional changes it leaves in the thinking personality in man.

The total reactions gained by the mind's working in the world fall under, according to Lord Krishna, three distinct types: (1) the disagreeable or the calamitous—meaning those that are positively bad; (2) agreeable or non-calamitous—meaning positively good; (3) the mixed type or balanced or average—wherein the tendencies are balanced equally between the good and the bad.

In the constant flow of time the present determines the immediate future and, therefore, these tendencies in their different textures must necessarily determine our reactions to our environments in the immediate future. If we extend this theory to the very last moment of our days in this embodiment it becomes amply evident that after the departure from here through death, the next embodiment and the general type of environment that we will find ourselves in, would be determined by the type of tendencies produced by our actions. This is what is called as the "reincarnation theory" in the *Sanatana Dharma*.

If the *Vasanas* are good (*Sattwic*), then a joyous field of prosperity and happiness would be the only realm wherein such a mind would discover its deserts. Those who are entertaining and cultivating deliberately the low animal-*vasanas* in themselves, they will find for themselves a complete fulfilment only by appearing in the lower womb. When the "tendencies" for good and bad are almost equal (*misram*) then we enter into this world-of-action—the world in which we are now living—the world of the intelligent man. No doubt, in each of us there is a call of the "higher" constantly leading us towards an undetermined and indeterminate ideal, but there are also barkings and brayings, hissings and roars, of the "lower" in us, constantly confusing and systematically distracting our vision of the ideal.

If an individual were to identify himself with the higher and, as best as he can, live up to the ideal, the "higher" *vasanas* shall multiply and ultimately silence the "lower", completely. If on the other hand, as is the fashion in the modern world, we allow ourselves to be tempted away by the "lower" in our identification with them, the animal-impulses in us shall multiply and make us a caricature of the Divine that we really are. In short, in the tug-of-war

between the "higher" and the "lower" the determining factor is the individual's own personality.

In both these cases, the *Vasanas* grow, be they good, be they bad, and in either case, there is still a manifestation as birth in the realms of pangs and perils. The transcendence of the experiencer-personality is possible only when the conditionings are totally ended and the *vasanas* are rendered to have no more power in them to hold the Pure Spirit seemingly at ransom.

To explain further the difference between abandonment (*Tyaga*) and renunciation (*Sannyasa*) the Lord here says, that for a *man* of renunciation there is no more any reaction either to the actions done in the past or to the actions undertaken now by him.

This idea brings out clearly the subtle difference that the Geeta makes between *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa*. Earlier we found that *Tyaga* was that capacity in us with which, from moment to moment, we withdrew ourselves from the impulses of our mind: while *Sannyasa* was the total renunciation of the entire "tendencies", both good and bad.

The Geeta-technique for the rehabilitation of man's personality so beautifully elaborated and exhaustively discussed, when briefly put would be: (a) the seeker first gets himself detached from the lower sensuous cravings and passions by identifying himself with the nobler ideals of self-control and moral-perfections. A mind so conditioned becomes tamer than a mind goaded by sensuality. This purified mind develops in itself the required amount of subtle powers of thinking, of consistent self-application, and of steady contemplation. On realising the Pure Be-ness all becomings end. To the pure Self there is no becoming: the "tendencies" of the mind (*Vasanas*) cannot shackle the

Spirit. Spirit of Its own is Infinite and in its Non-dual All-pervasiveness, Its subtle Presence cannot but be ever Immaculate and never conditioned.

The “pleasant”, the “unpleasant” and the “mixed” types of reaction (*Karma Phal*) reach only those who have an ego-centric sense of identification with the actions as well as their resultant reactions. Those who abandon both the sense of ego and the anxiety for the action-results (*Tyagi*) are not entangled by the clutches of ‘reactions’ of actions. Memories of the past are the fertile fields, where desires are cultivated and it is only in the heights of future that the fruits are borne by the trees of actions. Renouncing our indulgence with the inheritance of the past, and leaving all our anxieties for the future, to serve the world as a service of the Lord is true abandonment—*Tyaga*.

After thus handling the theme of abandonment in general, Krishna now takes up a closer examination of it, dissecting the very component parts that constitute work :

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥१३॥

13. *pancai tani mahabaho
karanani nibodha me
samkhye krtante proktani
siddhaye sarvakarmanam*

पञ्च-Five, ऐतानि-these, महाबाहो - O mighty armed, कारणानि-causes, निबोध-learn, मे-from Me, सांख्ये-in the Sankhya, कृतान्ते-which is the end of all action, प्रोक्तानि-as declared, सिद्धये-for the accomplishment, सर्वकर्मणाम्-of all actions.

13. Learn from Me, O mighty-armed, these five causes, as declared in the Sankhya (Upanishad) system, for the accomplishment of all actions.

When Arjuna was thus told conclusively that action could be done without ego-centric desires and clinging attachments to the fruits, an intelligent enquirer as he was then, he had every right to ask: "What constitutes an action." To lay bare the inner essence of action, Krishna analyses the anatomy of work—the external structure of action—and the physiology of action—the inner inspirations, motives and urges in work.

Addressing Arjuna as Mighty-Armed, Krishna declares that for the real accomplishment, fulfilment or achievement of an action, five aspects of action are necessarily to be disciplined and marshalled. These five are the limbs of action without which no action is ever possible. These five aspects, when they work in happy co-ordination, the undertaking is assured of the greatest success, be it secular or sacred, material or spiritual. The term "Mighty-Armed" is used to invoke the adventurous heroism in Arjuna for, a large share of daring courage, consistency of purpose, faith in oneself and intellectual heroism are necessary if one were to discipline one's actions and successfully accomplish a thorough cultural development within.

In this stanza the Geetacharya confesses that this enumeration of the aspects that constitute an action is not his own original contribution, but it is exactly what is said in the *Sankyan* philosophy. *Sankyan* philosophy as a separate text is no more existing..... may be, here, the word *Sankyan* indicates only the "Upanishads." The existing *Sankyan*-books do not mention of this five-fold categories. It is reasonable to suppose that at the time of Vyasa there might have been some books discussing this topic which

are now lost to us. However, one thing is clear : that this five-fold division, which the Lord discusses in the following stanzas, faithfully follows the philosophy of the Geeta as discussed so far. Geeta has declared that all actions cease when the knowledge of Self arrives, so that, the Adwaita commentator concludes “the Vedanta, which imparts us knowledge is “*the end of actions.*”

Herein the Lord enumerates the five constituents in all actions :

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥१४॥

14. *adhithanam tatha karta*
karanam ca prthagvidham
vividhas ca prthakcesta
daivam cai va tra pancamam

अधिष्ठानम्—The seat or body, तथा—also, कर्ता—the doer (ego), करणम्—the sense organs of perception, च—and, पृथग्विधम्—various, विविधाः—various, च—and, पृथक्—different, चेष्टा—functions (organs of action), दैवम्—the presiding deity, च—and, एव—even, अत्र—here, पञ्चमम्—the fifth.

14. The “seat” (body), the doer (ego), the various sense-organs of perception, the different functions of various organs of actions, and the presiding deity also, the fifth ;

The promise made in the previous stanza is being fulfilled herein and Lord Krishna enumerates the five component parts that go into the constitution of any action. We have already discussed that the enumeration as it stands today in this stanza does not correspond with the *Sankhyan*

declaration. Commentators interpret these terms, each slightly different from the others, and this fivefold division being rather obscure the various explanations of the commentators in themselves are not very helpful for a practical student. However, we can see in these five terms the twenty-four-fold division of the *Prakriti*, which the *Sankhyans* hold and follow.

Every work is undertaken with the help of the body (*Adhishtahnam*), for, the body is the gateway for the stimuli to enter as well as for the responses to exit. A body in itself can neither receive the world nor react with it unless there is the ego (*Karta*) functioning in and through it. There must be an intelligent personality, presiding over its own desires, wanting to fulfil them and thus constantly seeking a fulfilment through its body-activities. The ego sets the body in continuous activity. When an ego, thus riddled with its own desires, wants to seek its fulfilment in the world of objects outside, it certainly needs instruments (*Karanam*) of perception. Without these, the inner personality cannot come in contact with the field of enjoyment and satisfaction around it.

The term "function" (*Ceshta*) here has been commented upon by Shankara as the physiological activities, known as *Prana*, *Apana* etc. No doubt it is sufficiently explanatory to all students who have a knowledge of the traditions in the Vedantic thoughts. But to a lay student this explanation might read as rather confusing. As a result of the physiological activities (*Prana*, *Apana* etc.) the health of the body gets trimmed up and it must flow out in its own vigour and enthusiasm through the organs-of-action. Thus, for our understanding of these enumerations, we can directly take the term "function" (*Ceshta*) used here as indicating the organs-of-action.

The organs-of-perception are presided over by the five great elements.* Those presiding deities are technically called as the *Devas*, and they indicate the particular functions and faculties in the sense-organs, such as the “power of vision” of the eye, the “power of audition” in the ears etc., i.e. the sense organs must have their full vigour and must be functioning properly in order that they may play their part in any field of work.

Stripping off all these details of explanations if we re-read the stanza, it merely enumerates the constituent parts of every action. They are (1) the body, (2) the ego† (3) the organs-of-perception (4) the organs-of-action and (5) the five elemental forces. The stanza is dedicated in merely enumerating these five aspects without which no ego-centric activity is ever possible.

Now can these five become the component parts in every human activity?

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥१५॥

15. *sariravanmanobhire yet
karma prarabhate narah
nyaayyam va viparitam va
pancai te tasya hetavah*

* The eye by Fire, the ears by Space, the tongue by Water, the skin by Air and the nose by Earth.

† In Stee Shankara's commentary it is clearly defined as the “enjoyer” meaning the Spirit that has identified with an intellectual and mental demand for any given gratification (Upadhi-lakshano-bhokta).

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिः - By (his) body, speech and mind, यत्-whatever, कर्म-action, प्रारभते-performs, नरः- man, न्याय्यम्-right, वा-or, विपरीतम्-the reverse, वा-or, पञ्च-five, एते-these, तस्य-its, हेतवः-causes.

15. Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech and mind—whether right or the reverse—these five are its causes.

The above listed items must all come into full play in order to accomplish any work, and, therefore, these five component parts are called the causes for all actions. To show that there is no exception, the Lord says that whatever action a man might undertake, be it by his body, speech or mind, and that two whether right or wrong, in every expression of action there is the play of all these five essential parts.

These five constitute the equipment of action and the Spirit, the eternally Actionless, conditioned by the intellectual desires behaves as though an ego (*Jiva*), and this individualised personality, forgetting its own state of perfection and demanding satisfaction through sense gratifications, making use of the faculties of sense-enjoyment, strives in the world-of-objects to achieve, to gain, to aggrandize. Here we should not forget in our haste to grasp clearly that the five-fold division is the description of the “engine under the bonnet” and not of the “petrol”: and yet, “petrol” in itself cannot make the travel pleasant and successful—nor can the “engine” move without the “petrol”.

A motor vehicle becomes an automobile only when “petrol” plays through the “engine,” when the driver can by his faculties take the vehicle to its destination, which is

determined by the demand or the desire of the owner of the vehicle. If this analogy is understood, we shall correctly evaluate this portion of Krishna's enumeration, and can truly appreciate what the Lord means when he says "these five are the causes" of all work.

All these enumerations and explanations of the last two stanzas add up to what conclusion? The sense of agency of the Self is an illusion.

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥१६॥

16. *tatrai vam sati kartaram
atmanam kevalam tu yah
pasyaty akrtabuddhitvan
na sa pasyati durmatih*

तत्र-एवं-सति—This being the case (*idiomatic expression*), कर्तारम्—as the agent, आत्मानम्—the Self, केवलम्—alone, तु—verily, यः—who, पश्यति—sees, अकृत-बुद्धित्वात्—owing to (his) untrained understanding, न—not, सः—he, पश्यति—sees, दुर्मतिः—of perverted intelligence.

16. Now, such being the case, verily he who — owing to his untrained understanding — looks upon his Self, which is alone (never conditioned by the "engine"), as the doer, he, or perverted intelligence, sees not.

In the previous stanzas we found that action belongs to the realm of matter, no doubt, *in the presence* of the spirit. Failing to discriminate thus between the equipments of action and the actionless Spirit, which both in an unhealthy

combination between them come to manifest as an “actor” (doer), the poor ego-centric personality so born comes to pant and sigh at its own disappointments and failures, dances and loves at its own joys and successes. The moment an individual becomes aware of these inner mechanisms and their play, the delusory, ego-centric individuality ends as it becomes but a mere myth of the mind, a delusory phantom of a midsummer’s dream!! This idea is beautifully brought out here by Lord Krishna.

“This being the case” (*Tatra evam sati*): In all such actions, whether good or bad, as undertaken with the body, speech or mind, the essential component parts are the body, ego, organs-of-perception, organs-of-action and the elements, and thus all actions belong to the matter. But the Spirit which is the essential nature in man identifying with the matter vestures in him, comes to live through the disturbing destinies of the ever-changing man. All pangs and joys, all failures and successes, all imperfections and impediments, belong to the ego, which is the Spirit considering Itself as conditioned by these components of action. The Supreme Pure Self (*Kevalam Atmanam*) is misunderstood by the ordinary man to be the actor (*Kartaram*) and in the consequent ego-sense the divinity is forgotten and the individual comes to despair.

The causes for this misunderstanding have been indicated here. Untempered reason (*Akritabuddhi*) and perverted mind (*Durmati*) are the maladjustments in an individual because of which the right recognition of one’s own divinity is not maintained constantly within. The implication of the statement is that if a seeker can integrate himself — through the processes of disciplining his reasoning faculty and guiding his mind away from his intellectual perversities —

that individual will come to experience within himself that it is only the five-fold components made up of matter that are indulging in the agitations of the outer activity,*

Elucidating the above ideas more vividly the Lord continues :

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमांलोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥१७॥

17. *vasya na hamkrto bhavo
buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatva pi sa imaml lokan
na hanti na nibadhyate*

यस्य-Whose, न-not, अहंकृतः-egoistic, भावः-the notion, बुद्धिः-intelligence, यस्य-of whom, न-not, लिप्यते-is tainted, हत्वा-having slain, अपि-even, सः-he, इमान्-these, लोकान्-people, न-not, हन्ति-slays, न-not, निबध्यते-is bound.

17. He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose intelligence is not tainted (by good or evil),

* Even while they are all dancing round, Krishna, the Spiritual Truth, remains but motionless in the centre of the ring of the dancing crowd, untouched by the Gopies moving in their ecstatic trance. The divinely sweet maidens of Vrija, dance in thrilled ecstasy because of the maddening music of the Flute-bearer, who by His breath draws out the melody of existence. To identify ourselves with the Centre is to be the master of the situation: to play among the whirls of dancers is to suffer the fatigue and exhaustion, the thrills and sorrows of the milk-maids of Brindavan.

though he slays these people he slays not nor is he bound (by the action).

We are so far told that the realm of matter is the field of activity and the weeds of sorrows and agitations can grow only in them. The Spirit, the farmer, has an independent existence from this field, and yet the farmer in his identifications with and self-projections on the field comes to feel happy or unhappy according to the condition of the field at any given moment.

Similarly, it is our unhealthy contacts created by our self-projections on to the matter-envelopments around us that has given rise to the ego which in its turn comes to suffer the buffetings of life. Therefore, Krishna says, that he who has no sense of egoism and whose "intelligence is not tainted" by false values of possession, acquisition, aggrandisement etc., does no action even though activities take place all around and even through him.

This does not mean that a man of wisdom, who has withdrawn from his false evaluation of matter, will no more act at all in the world. A man of wisdom is not one who will move about as a stone statue. On the other hand, the statement only means, that even while he is acting in the world, to him, it is all a self-entertaining game. It is always our ego-centric clinging that leaves impressions (*vasanas*) in our mind, and thus actions of the past come to goad us to more and more activities. A Man of Perfection who has the necessary discriminative intellect learns to detach himself and act, and therefore, in him the footprints of the past activities cannot beat out any deepening footpath.

Only when the needle is in contact with the "record" can the gramophone thunder forth its song; only when the ego is in contact with the mind can the individual be pro-

pelled forth into the channels of his own *vasanas*. An egoless man of wisdom when he works in any field, is but expressing the Infinite will and therefore, in that attitude of total surrender and complete dedication no action can leave any impression in his mind.

Krishna says “*though he kills, he kills not ; nor is he bound*”. Here is the perfect technique of the poet Vyasa who from the generality of the philosophical statements suddenly takes the students of the Geeta into the immediate problem in hand ; the problem of Arjuna in the battle front, who hesitates to strike, though he is willing to be guided. Arjuna is told that if he can act in the world without identifying himself with the matter sheaths around him, and act continuously in the consciousness of the Divine, even if he kills his own kith and kin, teacher and sire, he will not be perpetrating any crime, nor will his actions leave in him murderous *vasanas*, distorting his cultural balance and personality beauty.

If we were to compare the results of the lusty, passionate acts of some self-seeking murderer, with the honourable heroic activities of some devotedly dedicated warrior championing the cause of his country's freedom and independence, we shall easily understand the above assertion of the Lord. The murderer develops the *vasanas*, and propelled by his tendencies, he again and again comes to commit heinous crimes and disturb the society ; while, the hero in the battle-front, though he too had caused harm to many a living creature, returns from the battle front as a more educated, noble and delicate personality. In the former, there is the ego and, therefore, the foul *vasanas* were got registered ; while in the latter, the soldier's mind was fixed in his love for the country, and, therefore, the murderous

activity in the battle-front could not leave in him any ugly mental residue. Once the ego is surrendered in the consciousness of the Divine, no more can remain in him the “bondage of *vasanas*”^{*}.

After thus describing the constituents that make up any action, the Geetacharya describes the “impulse to karma” and “the basis of Karma” :

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥१८॥

18. *jnanam jneyam parijnata*
trividha karmacodaha
karanam karma karte ti
trividhah karmasamgrahah

ज्ञानम्—Knowledge, ज्ञेयम्—the knowable (known), परिज्ञाता—the knower, त्रिविधा—three-fold, कर्मचोदना—impulse to action, करणम्—the organ, कर्म—the action, कर्ता—the agent, इति—thus, त्रिविधः—three fold, कर्मसंग्रहः—the basis of action.

18. Knowledge, the known and the knower form the three-fold “impulse to action” ; the organ, the action, the agent, from the three-fold “basis of action.”

In the scientific treatment of the subject matter, Lord Krishna had already explained the constituent parts that make up an action and also indicated that the entire assem-

^{*} Shankara asks , “ Nistraigunyepati vicharatam ko vidhih ko nishedhah ? ”.

bly is made up of only matter. Continuing the theme he is now trying to explain the three-fold-impulse that propels activity (*karma Chodana*) and also the basis-of-action (*Karma Sangraha*).

The “impulse to action”, according to Krishna, is a three-fold arrangement made up of “knowledge (*Gyanam*). the known (*Gyeyam*) and the knower (*Parigyatha*)”. These three are called technically in Vedant as the ‘*Triputi*’: indicating the experiencer, the experienced and the resultant experience—the knower, the known and the knowledge. Without these three no knowledge is ever possible, as all “impulses to act” and experience arises out of a play of these three. The *experiencer* playing in the field of the *experienced* gains to himself the various *experiences*, and these constitute the secret contents of all actions*.

The “impulse to action” can spring either from the “experiencer”, in the form of a desire, or from the “experienced”, in the form of a temptation, or from the “experience” in the form of similar memories of some past-enjoyments. Beyond these three there is no other “impulse to action” (*Karma Chodana*).

The “impulses to action” when it has arisen must also find a field to act and the “basis for action” (*Karma Sangraha*) is constituted of the instruments, the reaction and the agent (the actor). The ego that is suffering from its desire is the one that enters the field of activity and assumes to itself the attitude of ‘I am the actor’. This sense of

* Here we can also use the term “knowledge” and say: “The knower” playing in a field of the “known” gains to himself the various bits of “knowledge”.”

agency, expressed by the ego, can maintain itself only so long as it has got a vivid picture of the “fruit of his action” which he wants to gain. Fruit, meaning the profit or the gain that is intended to be gained by the action, is indicated here by the term ‘work’ (*Karma*). According to Sri Shankaracharya “‘Karma’ here means the end”*.

When a desirer (agent), encouraged by his constant attraction towards a satisfying end, wants to achieve it, he must necessarily have the instruments of action (*Karanam*) ; these instruments include not only the organs of perception and action, but also the inner equipments of the mind and the intellect. It cannot be very difficult for a student to understand that (1) an *agent* having a desire, (2) maintaining in his mind a clear picture of the *end* or the goal, (3) with all the necessary *instruments* to act thereupon would be the sum total contents of any activity (*Karma Sangraha*). If any one of the above three items is absent, action cannot take place. These three (*Karanam*, *Karta*, and *Karma*) are together designated as the parts of the “*Karma*-assembly”, the “basis of all *karmas*”—(*Karma Sangraha*).

Thus having roughly indicated in this stanza the three-fold “impulses of action” and the three-fold “basis of action”, Krishna continues to explain in His Song why different people act so differently under different impulses and obey different basis in their actions. He divides each one of them under the three categories of human nature, the good (*Sattvic*), the passionate (*Rajasic*), and the dull (*tamasic*).

* “that which is sought for, that which is reached through action by the agent”.

The Lord now proceeds to show the three-fold distinctions in each one of the above, according to the three predominant natures—the good, the passionate and the dull.

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावच्छृणु तान्यपि ॥१९॥

19. *jnanam karma ca karta ca
tridhai va guna baedatah
procyate gunasamkhvane
yathavac chrnu tany api*

ज्ञानम्—Knowledge, कर्म—action, च—and, कर्ता—actor, च—and, त्रिधा—of three kinds, एव—only, गुण-भेदतः—according to the distinction of temperments, प्रोच्यते—are declared, गुणसंख्याने—in the Science of Temperaments (Gunas), यथावत्—duly, शृणु—hear, तानि—them, अपि—also.

19. Knowledge, action and actor are declared in the Science of Temperaments (Gunas) to be of three kinds only, according to the distinctions of temperaments; hear them also duly.

As an introduction to what is to follow immediately, here it is said that “knowledge”, “action”, and the “actor” (agent), all the three, because of the difference of the temperament in the individual, at the given time of observation, fall under a three-fold division. This classification is being exhaustively explained in the following stanzas.

Guna is the preponderance of a given type of temperament in one's inner nature. The human mind and intellect

function constantly, but they always come to function under the different “ climatic conditions ” of the within. These varying climates of the mind are called the three *Gunas* : the good, the passionate, and the dull.

Under each of these temperaments the entire human personality behaves differently, and naturally, therefore, the permutations and combinations of the varieties make up the infinite types that are available in the world : even within the biography of one and the same personality we find different moods and behaviours at different periods of time, depending entirely upon the occasion, the type of the situation, the nature of the problem and the kind of challenge the person is called upon to face.

According to the Science of the *Gunas*, as enunciated in the Kapila's *Sankhya Yoga*, knowledge, action and actor are classified under these three categories. They are being enumerated here and Krishna invites the students of the Geeta to ‘ *listen attentively to them* ’. It is meaningless in fact to ask Arjuna to listen to the discourses, because, he was all the time listening to the Lord. The implication must be that the teacher is attracting the special attention of the student because of the importance of the theme.

Here follows the three-fold type of Knowledge :

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥२०॥

20. *sarvabhutesu yenai kam
bhavam avyayam iksate
avibhaktam vibhaktesu
taj jnanam viddhi sattvikam*

सर्वभूतेषु-In all beings, येन-by which, एकम्-one, भावं-reality, अव्ययम् - indestructible, ईक्षते-one) sees, अविभक्तम्-undivided, विभक्तेषु - in the divided, तत्-that, ज्ञानम्-knowledge, विद्धि-know, सात्त्विकम्-Sattwic (pure)

20. That by which one sees the one indestructible Reality in all beings, undivided in the divided, know that knowledge as *Sattwic* (Pure).

Inasmuch as the constituents of action, namely knowledge, work and the ego, are under the influences of different moods, each one of them can fall into three types. We fluctuate between these three *gunas* and the different proportions in which they are mixed up in our bosom determine the innumerable types of individuals that we recognise in every community.

These detailed descriptions of the different types of "knowledge", "action" and "actor" are given here NOT for the purpose of judging and classifying others, but it is mainly meant for the seeker to understand himself. A true student of culture and self-development must try to maintain himself as far as possible, in the *Sattwic* temperament. By self-analysis, we can come to diagnose ourselves, and immediately remedy the defects in us.

In this stanza, we have the description of the *Sattwic* type of "knowledge". The "knowledge" by which the one Imperishable Being is seen in all existences, is the *Sattwic* intellect. Though the forms constituted by the different body-mind-intellect equipments are all different in different living creatures, the *Sattwic* "knowledge" recog-

nizes all of them as the expressions of one and the same Truth which is the Essence in all of them.

Just as an electric engineer recognises the *same* electricity flowing through all the bulbs, a goldsmith recognises the *one* metal 'gold' in all ornaments, just as every one of us is aware of the *same* cotton in all the shirts, so also, the intellect that sees the changeless screen upon which the play of life and the throbs of existence are projected, has the "knowledge" that is *Sattwic*.

Undivided in the divided (*Avibhaktam Vibhakteshu*) :— Even if there be hundred different pots, of different shapes and colour, and of different sizes, the "space" is the *one* undivided factor in all these different pots. Bulbs are different, but the current that is expressing through them all is the *one* electricity. Waves are different, and yet the *same* ocean is the reality and the substance in all the waves. Similarly, the one LIFE throbs in all, expressing Itself differently at Its different manifestations, because of the different constitution in the matter-arrangements. The "knowledge" that can recognise the play (*vilas*) of this One Principle of Consciousness in and through all the different equipments, is the intelligence that is fully *Satwic*.

What type of an intellect does the "passionate" possess?

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।

वेत्ति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥२१॥

21. *prthaktvena tu yaj jnanam*
nanabhavan prthagvidhan
vetti sarvesu bhutesu
taj jnanam viddhi rajasam

पृथक्त्वेन—As different from one another, तु—but, यत्—which, ज्ञानम्—knowledge, नानाभावान्—various entities, पृथग्विधान्—of distinct kinds, वेत्ति—knows, सर्वेषु—(in) all, भूतेषु—in beings, तत्—that, ज्ञानम्—knowledge, विद्धि—know, राजसम्—*Rajasic*.

21. But that knowledge which sees in all beings various entities of distinct kinds, (and) as different from one another, know that knowledge as *Rajasic* (Passionate).

After having found a description of the good, we have herein an equally complete description of the “knowledge” of the passionate (*Rajasic*).

The “knowledge” that recognises plurality by reason of the separateness, is *Rajasic* in its mode. The “knowledge” of the passionate, ever restless in its energy, considers other entities as different from one another; to the *Rajasic* “knowledge” the world is an assortment of innumerable types of different varieties; the intellect of such a man perceives distinctions among the living creatures and divides them into different classes—as the animal, the vegetable and the human kingdoms

The very core of the Hindu culture is the recognition of the oneness of the entire living world of creatures. It is the concept of the plurality that gives rise to all the passions and desires. And where the plurality is recognised, there the ego has crystalized in the perceiver. Unless the individual stands apart from the world as a separate, distinct entity, he will not be able to recognise a multiple world of separate beings and things.

What then is the nature of “knowledge” of the Dull?

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।

अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥२२॥

22. *yat tu kṛtsnavad ekasmin
karye saktam ahetukam
atattvarthavad alpam ca
tat tamasam udahrtam*

यत्-Which, तु-but, कृत्स्नवत्-as if it were the whole, एकस्मिन्-one single, कार्ये-to effect, सक्तम्-attached, अहैतुकम्-without reason, अतत्त्वार्थवत्-without foundation in Truth, अल्पम्-narrow, च-and, तत्-that, तामसम्-*Tamasic* (dark), उदाहृतम्-is declared.

22. But that which clings to one single effect, as if it were the whole, without reason, without foundation in truth, and narrow, that is declared to be *Tamasie* (Dull).

An intellect that is fumed under the dullening effects of extreme *Tamas* clings to one single effect as though it were the whole, never enquiring into its cause. The “knowledge” of the dull is painted here as that belonging to the lowest type of spiritual seekers. They are generally fanatic in their faith, in their devotion and in their views and values in life. They never enquire into and try to discover the cause of things and happenings: they are unreasonable (*ahetukam*).*

* Sankara comments upon this word and declares it to mean as “not founded on reason”. The knowledge of the dull recognises only the effects, but ignores the causes.

THE GOOD (<i>Sattwic</i>)	THE PASSIONATE (<i>Rajasic</i>)	THE DULL (<i>Tamasic</i>)
<p>The "knowledge" which can recognise and live constantly the Truth is <i>Sattwic</i>. To recognise the harmony underlying the flux of things, to feel the unity in the diversity of forms and behaviours, to live the awareness of the One Life that pulsates in every bosom, is the genuine achievement of a <i>Sattwic</i> intellect.</p>	<p>The "knowledge" which looks upon other living entities as different from one another is passionate: An intellect to which the world is an assortment of various types, behaving under various moods differently, an intellect that recognises the world as made up of an endless incomprehensible plurality, is possessed of "knowledge" that is <i>Rajasic</i>.</p>	<p>The "knowledge" which fanatically regards, without rhyme or reason, a particular path or view as the sole end, without understanding the path or view correctly and sticks on to it with extreme self-arrogance and egoistic insistence, the "knowledge" which considers the entire world of things and beings as meant for its owner and his pleasures alone,—the "knowledge" which fails to recognise anything really existing beyond the little ego, is <i>Tamasic</i>.</p>

Looking through such a confused intellect of fixed ideas, the dull fail to see things as they are, but they invariably project their own ideas upon the world and judge it wrongly. In fact, a man of *Tamasic* intellect views the world as if it is meant for him and his pleasures alone. With a clinging attachment to everything, without any firm foundation upon the Truth, with extreme self-arrogation he lives on for the satisfaction of his matter envelopments. He ignores totally the Divine Presence, the Infinite Consciousness. The "knowledge" of the dull is circumscribed by its own concept of self-importance and thus his visions become narrow (*alpam*) and limited.

To summarize, the "knowledge" of the good perceives the oneness underlying the universe; the comprehension of the passionate recognises the plurality of the world; and the understanding of the dull indicates a highly crystallized self-centred ego in him, and his view of the world is always perverted and ever false. In the world outside we can recognise the sad lot of restlessness and sorrow in those who possess a *Tamasic* intellect. The destiny of the *Rajasic* type is much better, even though to the extent it recognises the multiplicity it has also its own despairs and agitations. But the the highest order of intelligence falls under the *Sattwic* type and people who possess such intelligence come to live a life of extreme peace and harmony, joy and bliss.

It must again be noted that in this chapter we shall come across such a three-fold division in the various aspects of our personal inner life and they are not meant to serve as reckoner to classify others, but they are meant to size ourselves from time to time.

The Three-fold nature of action is now described in the following stanzas :

नियतं सङ्गरहितमरागद्वेषतः कृतम् ।

अफलप्रेप्सुना कर्म यत्तत्सात्त्विकमुच्यते ॥२३॥

23. *niyatam sangarahitam*
aragadvesatah krtam
aphalaprepsuna karma
yat tat sattvikam ucyate

नियतम्—Ordained, सङ्गरहितम्—free from attachment, अरागद्वेषतः—without love or hatred, कृतम्—done, अफलप्रेप्सुना—by one not desirous of the fruit, कर्म—action, यत्—which, तत्—that, सात्त्विकम्—Sattwic (pure), उच्यते—is declared.

23. An action which is ordained, which is free from attachment, which is done without love or hatred by one not desirous of the fruit, that action is declared to be *Sattwic* (pure).

Having so far explained the three types of “knowledge”, Krishna now classifies “actions” (*Karma*) under the same three heads. A *Sattwic* action is the best, productive of peace within and harmony without, the field of activity, and, therefore, it is the purest of the three types of “actions”. It is an obligatory action (*Niyatam*), a work that is undertaken for the work’s own sake, in an attitude that the work itself is worship. Such activities chasten the personality and are ever performed in a spirit of inspiration. Inspired activities, naturally, excel the very excellence the actor or the doer is ordinarily capable of. Such an activity is always undertaken without any attachment (*Saṅgarāhitam*), and without any anxiety for gaining any definite end.

It is a dedicated activity of* love and yet it is not propelled by either love or hatred.

The missionary work undertaken by all sages and seers are examples to the point. We too can recognise the same type of work which we unconsciously perform on some rare occasions. A typical example that can at this moment be remembered is an individual nursing his own wounded limb. As soon as, say, your left toe strikes against some furniture in the house, and gets wounded, the entire body bends down to nurse it. Herein, there is neither any special love for the left leg nor is there any particular extra attachment for the left leg as compared with other parts of the body. To an individual the whole body is himself, and all parts are equally important: within a given body the individual feels himself totally pervaded and completely occupied.

In the same fashion a *Sattwic* intellect, that has recognised the All-pervading One, lives in the consciousness of the One Reality that permeates the whole universe and therefore, to him the leper and the prince, the sick and the healthy, the rich and the poor are all only different parts of his own spiritual personality. Such an individual serves the world in a sense of self-fulfilment and inspired joy.

Summarising, we can indicate that a *Sattwic*-karma is a humane action, performed without any attachment, and it is not motivated either by likes (*Raga*) or by dislikes (*Dwesh*), and all such activities are undertaken without any desire to enjoy the results thereof. Action itself is fulfilment; a *Sattwic* man acts because to remain without service is chok-

* An act of love, not merely an act of law, an act of grace, and not a simple act of obligation.

ing death to him. Such a man of *Sattwic* “action” alone is a true Brahmin—the good.

What is Rajasic action?

यत्तु कामेप्सुना कर्म साहंकारेण वा पुनः ।

क्रियते बहुलायासं तद्राजसमुदाहृतम् ॥२४॥

24. *yet tu kamepsuna karma
sahamkarena va punah
kriyate bahulayasam
tad rajasam udahrtm*

यत्-Which, तु-but, कामेप्सुना-by one longing desires, कर्म-action, साहंकारेण-with egoism, वा-or, पुनः-again, क्रियते-is performed, बहुलायासम्-with much effort, तत्-that, राजसम्-Rajasic (passionate), उदाहृतम्-is declared.

24. But that action which is done by one, longing for desires, or again with egoism, or with much effort, that is declared to be *Rajasic* (passionate).

The “action” of the passionate (*Rajasic*) is that which is undertaken to win one’s desires with an extremely insistent I-act-mentality. Generally such undertakings are works of heavy toil, bringing in great strain, and its consequent physical fatigue and mental exhaustion. The individual is impelled to act and struggle by a well defined and extremely arrogant ego-sense. He works generally under tension and strain, since he comes to believe that he alone can perform it and no body else will ever help him. All the time he is

exhausted with his own anxieties and fears at the thought whether his goal will ever be achieved or not. When an individual works thus with an arrogant ego with all its self-centredness, he becomes so restless as to make him totally exhausted and completely shattered. Such "actions" belong to the category of the passionate (*Rajasic*).

All activities of political leaders, social workers, great industrialists, over-anxious parents, fanatic preachers, proselytizing missionaries, blind money makers, are examples of this type when they are at their best.*

The characteristic features in the actions of the "dull-type" are described below.

अनुबन्धं क्षयं हिंसामनपेक्ष्य च पौरुषम् ।

मोहादारभ्यते कर्म यत्तत्तामसमुच्यते ॥२५॥

25. *anubandham ksayam himsam
anapeksya ca paurasam
mohad arahyate karma
yat tat tamasam ucyate*

अनुबन्धम्—Consequence, क्षयम्—loss, हिंसाम्—injury, अनपेक्ष्य—without regard, च—and, पौरुषम्—(one's own) ability, मोहात्—from delusion, आरभ्यते—is undertaken, कर्म—action, यत्—which, तत्—that, तामसम्—Tamasic (dark), उच्यते—is declared.

* For even these can easily fall into the type of the "dull" (TAMASIC) which the next stanza will describe. Hence we say, 'when they are at their best.'

25. That action which is undertaken from delusion, without a regard for the consequence, loss, injury and ability, that is declared to be *Tamasic* (dark).

The “actions” (*Karma*) of the dull type (*Tamasic*) are performed without any consideration for the consequences thereof, without any regard for their loss of power or vitality. They never care for the loss or injury caused to others by their actions, or do they pay any attention to their own status and ability, when they act. All such careless and irresponsible “actions” (*Karmas*) undertaken merely because of some delusory misconception of the goal fall under the *Tamasic* type. Habits of drinking, reckless gambling, corruption, etc., are all examples of the dull (*Tamasic*) “action”.

Such people have no regard for the consequence of their actions. Ere long, they lose their vitality, and injure all those who are depending upon them. They surrender their dignity and status, their capacities and subtle faculties—all for the sake of their pursuit of certain delusory goal of life. All their demand is a temporary joy of some sense gratification and a tickling satisfaction of some fancy of the hour. A race—goer once, justifying himself asked, “all cannot win—but each day some one must win; why not then today I am that somebody?” We need not comment upon the stupid thoughtlessness of this argument.

The actions of this type, *Tamasic*, immediately provide the performer with a substantial dividend of sorrow. The *Rajasic* action comparatively takes a longer lapse of time to bring its quota of disappointments and sorrows, while the *Sattwic* type of “action” is always steady and ever blissful.

CHART II. *The Three Types of "Karma"—Work.*

THE GOOD (<i>Sattwic</i>)	THE PASSIONATE (<i>Rajasic</i>)	THE DULL (<i>Tamasic</i>)
<p><i>Sattwic</i> actions are those that are one's own obligatory duties towards the society, performed without any clinging attachment to the fruits thereof and that are not motivated by likes and dislikes. He performs these duties just spontaneously. He seeks his fulfilment and joy in the very work itself. Such <i>Sattwic</i> actions are undertaken only by men who possess <i>Sattwic</i> "knowledge."*</p>	<p><i>Rajasic</i> activities are those that are propelled by some desires to be fulfilled, that are performed in a self-centred delusory attitude of "I-am-the-doer vanity" that are undertaken with great strain and labour on the part of the actor or doer. Such "actions", are undertaken by the Passionate, who possess the <i>Rajasic</i> "knowledge."*</p>	<p><i>Tamasic</i> actions are those that are undertaken without any regard for the consequences thereof, that bring in disaster and sorrow to all around and about the doer, and that saps dry the abilities and vitalities in the doer himself. Such actions spring from some delusory misconceptions of the Goal of 'life in the individual. Such "actions" of the dull are generally met with only in persons who possess <i>Tamasic</i> "knowledge."*</p>

* For an explanation of "knowledge" *Sattwic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*, refer Chapter I

The three kinds of 'doers' (actors) are described in the following stanza :

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योर्निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥२६॥

26. *muktasango nahamvadi*
dhrtiyutsahasamanvitah
siddhyasiddhyor nirvikarah
karta sattvika ucyate

मुक्तसङ्गः - Who is free from attachment, अनहं-
वादी - non-egoistic, धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः - endowed with
firmness and enthusiasm, सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः - in success
or failure, निर्विकारः - unaffected, कर्ता - an agent,
सात्त्विकः - Satwika (pure), उच्यते - is called.

26. An agent who is free from attachment, non-
egoistic, endowed with firmness and enthusiasm,
and unaffected in success or failure, is called
Sattwik (pure).

So far we had a description of the three types of
“ Knowledge ” and “ action ”. The third of the constituents
that goes into the make-up of an action is the “ Doer ”, the
ego that has the desire to do. Since the three *Gunas* come
to influence the psychological life and the intellectual percep-
tion of all of us, the doer-personality in each one of us must
also change its modes and temperaments according to the
preponderating *Guna* that rises to rule the bosom at any
given period of time. Consequently, the “ ego ” also is
classified under three kinds. With this stanza starts the

discussion on the three types of "actors" (*Karta*) who act in the world outside.

A *Sattwic* "Actor" is the one who is free from attachment to any of his kith and kin (*mukta sangaha*) and non-egoistic (*Anahamvadin*). He is one who has no clinging attachment to the things and beings around as he has not got any false belief that the world outside will bring to him a desirable fulfilment of his existence. He sincerely feels that he has not done anything spectacular even when he has actually done the greatest good to mankind, because he surrenders his ego-centric individuality to the Lord through his perfect attunement with the Infinite.

When such an individual—who has destroyed in himself his ego-sense and the consequent sense of attachment—works in the worldly fields of activities he ever acts with firm resolution (*Dhriti*) and extreme zeal (*Utsaha*). The term '*Dhriti*' means "fortitude"—the subtle faculty in man that makes him strive continuously towards a determined goal. When obstacles come on his way, it is his faculty of '*Dhriti*' that discovers for him more and more courage and enthusiasm to face them all and to continue striving towards the same determined goal. This persevering tendency to push oneself on to the work until one reaches the halls of success, unmindful of the obstacles that one might meet with on the path, is called '*dhriti*'. And '*Utsaha*' means untiring self-application with a dynamic enthusiasm on the path of achievement while pursuing success.

Lastly, a *Saitwic* "actor" is one who ever strives unperturbed both in success and in failure, both in pleasure and in pain. At this moment I can only think of one example of this type of "Actor" (*Karta*): the Nurse in the

hospital. She has no attachment to the patient ; she has no ego that she is curing the patient, because she knows that there is the ability of the doctor behind every successful cure. She has fortitude (*Dhriti*) and enthusiasm (*Utsaha*)—or else she will not be continuing efficiently in her job And lastly, she is not envious for the success or failure ; she does not rejoice when a patient walks out fully cured, nor does she moan for every patient that dies. She cannot afford such an indulgence. She understands the hospital to be an island of success and failure, of births and deaths, and she is there only to serve.

An “ actor ” (or agent) of the above type is one who suffers form the least dissipation of his energies, and so he successfully manages to bring into the field of his actions the mighty total possibilities of a fully unfolded human personality. The *Sattwic* “ agent ” strives joyously in *Sattwic* “ actions ” guided by his *Sattwic* “ knowledge ”—his is the most enduring success and the world of beings is the most benefitted by the inexhaustible rewards of the love-labour of such prophets.

A *Sattwic* “ actor ” as described above can be compared with the intelligent attitude, if we may say so, of the domestic broom-stick. No doubt, it is the broom that cleans the house and keeps it spic and span ; but by itself it is helpless and can only lie reclined, neglected and inert in its own corner. But while it is serving to clean the house, in its right understanding it must realise that if its softer-end is efficiently serving to clean the field, it is because its stouter-end is in the delicate hands of the Mother of the house.

A *Sattwic Karta* realises that in all his actions, his body, mind and intellect come into play and serve the world only

because the Spirit, the Infinite, is in contact with them. The equipments of matter are as helpless as the broom-stick in a corner. Whenever the body functions, the mind-intellect-equipment throbs and heaves it its pursuit of the new ideals and achievements. And this is because of the Life that thrills them into their respective expression.

If the broom-stick in its foolishness forgets the “will of the Mother” and instead of totally surrendering into her hands to become a vehicle for her Will to play through, it is harmful for the broom-stick. Generally, we find that whenever a broom mis-behaves in the hands of the “Mother”, she invariably upturns the broom-stic and bangs its head against the floor ! (to make the chords around it more tight). The faculties of the intellect, the beauties of the heart, the vitality of the body, are all vehicles for the sacred Will of the Spirit to sing through. If the vehicles are not properly disciplined, and if they do not come to surrender totally to the Infinite Lord, the vehicles get broken and shattered.

A *Sattwic* “Doer” is one who is ever conscious of the touch of the Infinite Light in all his activities at all times.

Who is the Rajasic “Doer”

रागीकर्मफलप्रेप्सुर्लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।

हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥२७॥

27. *ragi karmaphalaprepsur
lubdho himsatmako sucih
harsasokanvitah karta
rajasah parikirtitah*

रागी- Passionate, कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः - desirous of the fruits of action, लुब्धः - greedy, हिंसात्मकः - cruel, अशुचि-impure, हर्षशोकान्वितः - full of delight and grief, कर्ता-agent, राजसः - Rajasic (passionate), परिकीर्तितः - is called.

27. Passionate, desiring to gain the fruit of actions, greedy, harmful, impure, full of delight and grief, such an agent is said to be *Rajasic* (passionate).

A “doer” belonging to the passionate type is being painted here exhaustively. He is full of desires, passions and attachments and clings on deligently to some wished for gain or goal. He is swayed by passion (*ragi*) and is one who eagerly seeks the fruit of his work. He is ever greedy (*Lubhdah*) in the sense that such a *Rajasic* “doer” is never satisfied at whatever gains he comes to enjoy, and greedily he thrists for more. He is insatiable because his desires multiply moment to moment.

When a man full of desires and passions, with mounting greed works, he naturally becomes very malignant (*Himsatmakha*) in his programmes of pursuit. He would never hesitate to injure another, if such injury were to win his end. He is blind to the amount of sorrow he might be bringing to others, he is concerned only with the realisation of his ulterior motives. A man of this type with the above qualities, when he becomes maliciously resolved to gain his own ends it is but natural that he becomes impure (*Asucih*), meaning “immoral.”

Even unrighteous methods and vulgar immoralities are no ban to such a “doer” and he will pursue them if thereby

his particular desire can be fulfilled. He may be ordinarily quite a moral and righteous man, but the beauty of his composure and the steadiness of his morality, expressed by him during his quieter moments, all fly away as brilliant splinters when the sledge hammer of his greed and passion, vengeful plans and malignant schemes, thuds upon his heart.

It is but natural that such a passionate “doer” when he acts in his blinding desires, comes to live, all through his embodied existence, a sad life of agitations, “moved by joys and sorrows” “full of delight and grief (*Harsha-Soka-Anvita*).” This completes the picture of a man who is a passionate “doer”.

And how does a Tamasic “doer” function in the field of activity?

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकोऽलसः ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥२८॥

28. *ayuktah prakrtah stabdhah
sadho naikrtiko lasah
visadi diughasutri ca
karta tamasa ucyate*

अयुक्तः - Unsteady, प्राकृतः - vulgar, स्तब्धः - unbending, शठः - cheating, नैष्कृतिकः - malicious, अलसः - lazy, विषादी - desponding, दीर्घसूत्री - procrastinating, च - and, कर्ता - agent, तामसः - Tamasic (dull), उच्यते - is said.

28. Unsteady, vulgar, unbending, cheating, malicious, lazy, desponding and procrastinating, such an agent is said to be *Tamasic* (Dull).

Here we have a description of a *tamasic* "doer" pursuing his work motivated by his *Tamasic* "knowledge" and expressing himself through his *Tamasic* "actions".

Uncontrolled (*ayuktah*): A "doer" who has no control over himself and, therefore, is ever unsteady in his self-application, is of the *Tamasic* type. He becomes so unbalanced in his activities, because his mind is not obedient to the warning of his intellect. A *yukta*-mind is one which is obedient to and perfectly under the control of the intellect. A *Tamasic*-man is uncultured inasmuch as he acts in the world, spurred by the impulses and instincts of his own mind. The glory of a cultured man comes out only when he brings the impulsive storms of his mind under the chastening control and intelligent guidance of his intellect. *Ayuktah* is one who behaves as though he has no control over his own animal impulses and low instincts. When such an individual acts in the world, he cannot but behave as a vulgar man (*Prakṛita*).

When an individual thus acts, if anyone around him were to show up an intellectual mirror for him to recognize his own vulgarities, he would not readily accept the picture and realise that his methods of living are vulgar. He is arrogant and obstinate (*Stabdah*) and in his stubborn nature he will not lend himself to be persuaded to act more honourably.

Dishonest (*Sahat*) : He becomes dishonest in the sense that he becomes extremely deceitful. Herein the dishonesty or deceitfulness arises out of his incapacity to see any point

of view other than the false conclusions into which he has fallen. Such an individual is not a dependable character, inasmuch as he conceals his real motives and purposes from others around him and secretly works out his programmes which generally bring about a lot of sorrow to all around him.

Malicious (*Naishkrīkah*) : This term describes, according to Sankara, one who is bent upon creating quarrels and disputes among people*, and with a vengefulness he pursues his adversary to destroy him. Family feuds etc. are typical examples.

Indolent (*alasa*) : The dull “doer” is a great indolent man spending his time in over-indulgence. He is an idler in the sense that he would love to avoid all creative endeavours and productive efforts if by deceit or cunning he can procure easily and readily enjoyable chances and pleasure-goods. He would pursue such a path however immoral it may be. He is a social pestilence: he enjoys and consumes without striving and producing. He will put forth no effort; drowsiness of intellect that renders him incapable of correct thinking is a typical feature in him. The three brothers of Lanka in fact represent these three types of “doers”. Of them, Kumbhakarna—who sleeps six months and wakes up only to spend the rest of the six months in eating is symbolic of a *Tamasic*—“doer”†

Despondent (*Vishadi*) : He is one who will not meet the challenge of life squarely. He has not the virulence or

* Para-vritti-chedanaparah—He maintains a malicious attitude towards any body who tries to come and interfere in the way of his desire-pursuits.

† Ravana, the mighty, represents the Rajasic-Karta and Vibhishana, the devout, is an example of the Sattwic-Karta.

the stamina to stand up against the challenges that march against him. This is because his over-indulgent nature has sapped out all his vitality and courage to meet life. Invariably he spends his time complaining of men and things around him and wishes for a secure spot in the world where he will be away from all obstacles so that he may peacefully continue satisfying his endless thirst for sensuous enjoyments.

Procrastination (*Dirgha-sutri*): An individual so benumbed in his inner nature, slowly gathers within himself an incapacity to arrive at any firm judgement. Even if he comes to any vague decision he has not the sufficient will to continue the consistent pursuit of his judgment. Indolent as he is, by nature, more often than not he postpones the right activity until its too late. This procrastinating tendency is a natural tendency of a *Tamasic* - "actor". The term *dirghasutri* has been interpreted by some commentators as "harbouring deep and long (*dirgha*) vengeance against others (*sutia*), which is also not inappropriate in the context of the thought development in this stanza.

Thus one who is unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, malicious, indolent, desponding and procrastinating, belongs to the dullest type of "agents" available in the fields of human endeavour. This and the preceding two stanzas provide us with three beautifully framed mental pictures, bringing out in all details the *Sattwic*, the *Rajasic* and the *Tamasic* types of "doers" available in the world. As earlier we had already emphasized, these pictures are given not as yardsticks to classify others, but it is meant for the seekers to observe themselves. Whenever a true seeker discovers symptoms of *Tamas* and *Rajas* growing in him he

CHART III

The Three Types of Actors (Karta)

THE GOOD (<i>Sattvic</i>)	THE PASSIONATE (<i>Rajasic</i>)	THE DULL (<i>Tamasic</i>)
An actor (doer) who has no attachment to the field in which he is acting—who is not egoistic—who is full of fortitude and zeal—who is unmoved by the results of his actions: be it success or failure—such a doer is considered a <i>Sattvic-karta</i> .*	An actor (doer) who is swayed by passions—who ever anxiously ogles at the expected fruit of each action—who is extremely greedy—who acts bringing often harm to others—who is impure and sometimes immoral in his means—who is ever buffeted by the joys and sorrows of life—such a doer is considered as a <i>Rajasic-karta</i> *	An actor (doer) who has no control over his own mental impulses and instincts—who will readily stoop to any vulgarity—who is arrogant and obstinate in his own wrong conclusions—who is deceitful and malicious—who is indolent—who ever lives worried about “what is to be done” by him—such a “doer” is considered as a <i>Tamasic-karta</i> .*

* Please refer charts I and II for a clearer understanding of the three-fold classifications of ‘knowledge’ and ‘action’. Note that the Sattvic ‘actor’ is propelled by Sattvic ‘knowledge’, and accomplishes ‘actions’. So too the man of passionate nature and the man who falls under the dull category—both of them are propelled by their respective types of ‘knowledge’ and accomplish the results (actions) thereof.

should take notice of them at once, and consciously strive himself to regain his *Sattwic* beauty.

“According to the predominating *guna*, “understanding” and “fortitude” also can fall under a three-fold classification”—says Krishna :

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतत्रिविधं शृणु ।

प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥२९॥

29. *buddher bhedam dhrtes cai va
gunatas trividham srnu
procyamanam asesena
prthaktvena dhananjaya*

बुद्धेः - Of understanding, भेदम् - division, धृतेः - of fortitude, च - and, एव - even, गुणतः - according to qualities (modes or moods), त्रिविधम् - three-fold, शृणु - hear, प्रोच्यमानम् - as I declare, अशेषेण - fully, पृथक्त्वेन - severly, धनञ्जय - O Dhananjaya.

29. Hear (you) the three-fold division of “understanding” and “fortitude” (made) according to the qualities, as I declare them fully and severally, O Dhananjaya !

Work is constituted of, no doubt, by the three factors : the “knowledge” the “action” and the “actor”. All these three factors were shown to fall under three-fold classifications, and all these classifications were described in the previous nine stanzas.* When an actor guided by his

* As a ready help for your memory refer the previous charts.

knowledge comes to act in the world, no doubt manifestation of work takes place. But underlying these three are two factors which supply the real fuel and the motive force in all sustained endeavours. They are understanding (*buddhih*) and fortitude (*Dhriti*).

The former *buddhi* or “understanding”, means the intellectual capacity in the individual to grasp what is happening around. Fortitude (*Dhriti*) is the faculty of constantly keeping one idea seen in any intelligent individual and of consistently working it out to its logical end; consistency of purpose and self-application, without allowing oneself to be tossed over hither and thither like a dry leaf at the mercy of the fickle breeze, is called “fortitude”.

The operative part in every field of activity is controlled and guided by our intellectual capacity of “understanding” and its faithful consistency of purpose, the “fortitude”. The stanza under the pen is an introduction to the scientific discussion of these two faculties (*Buddhih* and *Dhritih*) and their three-fold classification.

Krishna invites again the special attention of Arjuna to these classifications which he is going to discuss severally.

What is a Sattwic understanding?

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३०॥

30. *pravrttim ca nivrttim
karyakarye bhayabhaye
bandham moksam ca ya veti
buddhih sa partha sattviki*

प्रवृत्तिम् - Action, the path of work, च - and, निवृत्तिम् - the path of renunciation, च - and, कार्य-कार्ये - what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, भयाभये - fear and fearlessness, बन्धम् - bondage, मोक्षम् - liberation, च - and, या - that, वेत्ति - knows, बुद्धिः - understanding, सा - that, पार्थ - O Partha, सात्त्विकी - Sattvic.

३०. That which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that “understanding” is *Sattwic* (pure), O Partha.

The intellect may be considered as having the best type of “understanding” if it can readily discriminate the beings and situations in its field of activity. Intellect has got various functions—observing analysing, classifying, willing, wishing, remembering and a host of others—and yet, we find that the one faculty that is common in all of them is the power of discrimination. Without discrimination, neither observation, nor classification, neither understanding nor judgment, is ever possible. Essentially, therefore, the function of the intellect is “discrimination” which is otherwise called the faculty of right “Understanding”.

An “understanding” (*Budhi*) which is capable of clearly discriminating between the *right* field of pursuit and the *wrong* field of false propositions is the highest type of “understanding”. It must have the nerve to encourage the individual to pursue the right path and must have also the heroism to persuade him away from all wrong fields of futile endeavour. In short, true “understanding” has got

a ready wit to discriminate between actions that are to be pursued (*Pravritti*) and actions that are to be discarded (*Nivritti*).

An intellect that can discriminate between the true and the false types of work must also be able to function in judging correctly “*what is right and what is wrong.*” Every moment we are called upon to make a judgment in deciding upon what responses should be shown to the ever-changing flux of happenings and challenges that take place continuously around us. A *Sattwic Buddhi* helps us always to arrive at the correct judgment. A person in a mood of anger or or with a wounded vanity suddenly resigns his job only to regret thereafter for the folly of his action. This is a case wherein his capacity to judge rightly was mutilated by his bad temper of the moment—or due to his extreme sense of vanity—and there, he has come to regrets. Arjuna himself had come to a state of mental hysteria wherein he had complained that this power of judgement had been lost.

What is to be feared and what is not to be feared (*Bhayabhava*): “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread”. Men of indiscrimination in their false evaluation of the sense-world hug on to the delusory objects and things, fearing nothing from them, and yet, they fear to read and understand philosophy, to strive and to experience the Infinite. A true intellect must have the right “understanding” to discriminate between what is to be feared and what is not to be feared. The typical example to illustrate this is strikingly brought out in Ramayana where we find the invincible hero, Sri Ramachandra with superhuman courage faces almost alone the mighty tyrant of Lanka to win Sita back, while the very same warrior Sri Rama readily meets with the demand of an ordinary ‘*dhobi*,’ who accuses the

same Sita. This is an example of the best type of “understanding” which knows when to be fearless, and when to be fearful.

Bondage and Liberation (*Bandham Moksham*) : If the “understanding” is clear, we can easily recognise the tendencies in our make-up that entangle the higher in us, and curtail its fuller play. To observe and analyse ourselves with the required detachment from ourselves and to critically evaluate our psychological behaviours and intellectual attitudes in life are not easy for all, these are possible only for those who are endowed with a well-cultivated *Sattwic* “understanding”. If we cultivate the *Sattwic* “understanding” it can not only diagnose for us the false values and wrong emotions that work in us, but it also can intuitively come to know the processes of unwinding us out from these cruel *vasanas* and help us regain our personality freedom from these subjective entanglements.

To summarise the *Sattwic Biddhi* is defined as one which makes known to us what type of work is to be done, and what type of work is to be renounced, as one which distinguishes the right from the wrong, which knows what is to be feared and what is to be faced fearlessly, as one which shows us the causes for our own present ugliness in life and explains to us the remedies for the same.

Proper “understanding” can make kingdom on desert, can churn out pure success from every threat of failure. Without “understanding” and “fortitude” even the best of chances purify to become an utter disaster. A little right “understanding” can convert the greatest of tragedies to serve us as chances for ushering in a prosperous destiny. To elucidate this idea, elderly Mahatmas generally tell us a story.

Once upon a time there was a kingdom on a river bank and on the opposite bank was a range of hills with thick forest infested with wild man-eaters. In this kingdom the ruling prince was always elected and each one held the reins of the country for five years. At the end of every fifth year, on an auspicious hour, the then Raja was ceremoniously conducted to the banks of the river and in a royal boat he was taken across the river and left in the jungle to be mauled and killed by the man-eaters.

Indiscriminate and foolish ones, elected by the public, joyously came to the throne and, forgetful of their appointment with death on the opposite bank, indulged in sensuality and lived on. As years passed, many a Prince thus met with his cruel death.

Then came Sri Budhiman, an elected ruler to the throne. As usual, the representatives and noblemen among the subjects announced after the election that he was the Raja and for five years he would be implicitly obeyed by all the subjects. Shri Budhiman, as soon as he ascended the throne, ordered first of all, his entire army to move on to the other bank and to clear the whole jungle. The treasury reserves were emptied in constructing a new city across the river on the other shore. He ordered all the great industrialists and businessmen to occupy the new capital, and at the end of the fifth year, according to the tradition of the kingdom, when he was ordered to retire to the other bank, he in regal splendour and glory reached his new kingdom, already kept ready, by his right "understanding".

An intellect that can thus discriminate properly, plan intelligently, execute diligently, can also prepare a vast kingdom for the hereafter—a kingdom of joy, success, and

prosperity. Such an “understanding” is considered by Krishna the *Sattwic* “understanding”.

What is Rajasic understanding?

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।

अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३१॥

31. *yaya dharmam adharma ca*
karyam ca karyam eve ca
aya thavat prajanati
buddhih sa partha rajasi

यया - By which, धर्मम् -Dharma, अधर्मम् -Adharma, च -and, कार्यम् -what ought to be done, च -and, अकार्यम् -what ought not to be done, एव -even, च -and, अयथावत् -wrongly, प्रजानाति -understands, बुद्धिः -intellect, सा -that, पार्थ - O Partha, राजसी - Rajasic (passionate).

31. That by which one wrongly understands *Dharma* and *Adharma* and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, that intellect, O Partha is *Rajasic* (passionate).

The “understanding” of the passionate (*Rajasic*) comes to judge the righteous (*Dharma*) and the unrighteous (*Adharma*), what is to be done and what is not to be done, in a slightly perverted manner (*Ayathavat*). *Rajasic* -“understanding” cannot come to the right judgement, because it is invariably coloured by its own preconceived notions and powerful likes and dislikes.

Sri Anandagiri in his notes on Shankara's Commentary brings out a subtle difference between the two pairs of phrases used in the stanza, righteous and the unrighteous (*Dharma* and *Adharma*) and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done (*Karya* and *Akarya*). He says, *Dharma* and *Adharma* here spoken of, refer to 'Apurva', that is, the forms which actions assume after their performance till their effects become perceptible; whereas *Karya* and *A-karya* refer to the performance or non-performance of the acts. Hence, the tautology".

What is a Tamasic "understanding"?

अधमे धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।

सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३२॥

32. *adharamam dharman iti ya
manyate tamasa vrta
sarvarthan viparitams ca
buddhih sa partha tamasi*

अधर्मम्-Adharma, धर्मम्-Dharma, इति - thus, या - which, मन्यते - thinks, तमसा - in darkness, आवृता - enveloped, सर्वार्थान् - all things, विपरीतान् - perverted, च - and, बुद्धिः - intellect, सा - that, पार्थ - O Partha, तामसी - Tamasic (dull).

32. That which, enveloped in darkness, sees *Adharma* as *Dharma* and all things perverted, that intellect, O Partha, *Tamasic* (dull).

The type of "understanding" which brings sorrow to everyone including the individual himself, is the "under-

CHART IV *The Three Types of Buddhi—"understanding"*.*

<i>The good (Sattwic)</i>	<i>The Passionate (Rajasic)</i>	<i>The Dull (Tamasic)</i>
<p>The "Understanding" that can readily judge things that are to be done (<i>Pravritti</i>) and things that are to be renounced or avoided (<i>Nivritti</i>)—that correctly discerns what ought to be done (<i>Karyam</i>) and what ought not to be done (<i>A-karyam</i>)—that can understand fear and fearlessness—is considered as the <i>Sattwic Buddhi</i>: an "understanding" of purity.</p>	<p>The "understanding" that erroneously conceives both the right and the wrong—that falsely judges what should be done and what should not be done (due to its false egoistic preconceptions)—is considered as the <i>Rajasic Buddhi</i>: an "understanding" of Energy.</p>	<p>The "understanding" that deems the wrong as the right, reversing every value—involving in darkness (ignorance) and, therefore, sees all things in a perverted way, ever contrary to the truth—is considered as the <i>Tamasic Buddhi</i>: an "understanding" of Darkness.</p>

* "Understanding" is intellectual ability with which one can readily judge rightly the rising situations and the received stimuli. Without this correct judgment one's responses cannot be appropriate. Sorrow of life, failures in our activities, are all due to the absence of the right and efficient type of "understanding" in us. *Sattwic Buddhi* never fails. *Rajasic Buddhi* can fail. But the *Tamasic Buddhi* often fails—and rarely succeeds.

standing” of the dull (*Tamasic*). Actually, it is no “understanding” at all; it can at best be called only a chronic bundle of misunderstanding. Such an intellect runs into its own conclusions, but, unfortunately, it lands always in wrong conclusions alone. It has such a totally perverted “understanding” that it recognises this “*A-Dharma*” as “*Dharma*”, the ‘right’ as ‘wrong’. This faculty of coming to wrong judgements is amply seen in the dull, because his entire reasoning capacity is enveloped by complete darkness and egoistic drunkenness.

Discussing the three types of “fortitude” Lord Krishna continues :

धृत्या यया धारयते मनः प्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।

योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥३३॥

33. *dhṛtya yaya dharayate*
manahpranendriyakriyā
yogena vyabhicarinṇya
dhṛtiḥ sa partha sattviki

धृत्या - By firmness, यया - (by) which, धारयते - holds, मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः - the functions of the mind, the Prana and the senses, योगेन - by Yoga, अव्यभिचारिण्या - unswerving, धृतिः - fortitude, सा - that, पार्थ - O Partha, सात्त्विकी - Sattwic (pure)

33. The unwavering “fortitude” by which, through Yoga, the functions of the mind, the *Prana* and the senses are restrained, that “fortitude” O Partha, is *Sattwic* (pure).

In this section of three stanzas we get a description of the three types of “fortitude” (*Dhṛiti*). There is no correct

English equivalent for this word ‘*dhriti*’ even though steadiness, constancy, fortitude are some of the terms used by the great translators. Each one of them is incomplete without the others, and one should admit that even all of them put together are but a shade less than the suggestions of the original word ‘*dhriti*’ in sanskrit.

Dhriti is that power within ourselves by which we consistently see the picture of a goal that we want to achieve; and while striving towards it, *dhriti* discovers for us the necessary consistency of purpose to pursue the path, in spite of all the mounting obstacles that rise on the way. *Dhriti* paints the idea, maintains it constantly in our vision, makes us steadily strive towards it, and when obstacles come, *dhriti* mobilises secret powers within ourselves to face them all courageously, heroically, and steadily. We shall use the term “fortitude” to indicate all the above mentioned suggestion implied in the term *dhriti*.

This secret fire in man that makes him glow in life and rockets him to spectacular achievements is not generally found in those who have no control over themselves and are voluptuously indulging in the sensuous fields. A dissipated individual, who has drained off his energy through his wrong-thinking and false-living, shall discover no *dhriti* in himself. The subtle faculty of “fortitude” is being analysed and classified here, under the three main heads: the good, (*Sattwic*) the passionate (*Rajasic*) and the dull (*Tamasic*). But in all of them, it is interesting to note, *dhriti* stands for “the consistency of purpose” with which every individual pursues his field of endeavour, chosen for him by his “understanding” (*Buddhi*).

The constancy with which one steadily controls one’s mind and sense-organs, and their activities, through single-

pointed attention and faithful concentration upon a given point of contemplation, is the *Dhriti* of the *Sattwic* type.

Mind alone can control the organs-of-action (*Pran-endriya*) and the organs-of perception (*Indriya*). To dissuade the organs of action and perception from their false pursuits of ephemeral joy, and the consequent dissipations, the mind must have some fixed attention to draw its energies and satisfactions from. Without fixing the mind upon something nobler and higher we cannot detach from the present pursuits. Therefore, Krishna insists that *yoga* is unavoidable.

With faithful contemplation upon the Self, the mind gains in its steadiness and equipoise, peace and satisfaction, and therefore, it developes its capacity to rule over the sense-organs. But all these achievements are possible only when his inward personality can constantly supply a steady stream of *dhriti*. Constancy in endeavour, consistency in purpose or “fortitude” that is found expressed in any field of activity, becomes *Sattwic Dhriti* when so constituted as described above.

What is Rajasic Dhriti?

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।

प्रसङ्गेन फलाकांक्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥३४॥

34. *yaya tu dharmakamarthan
dhrtiya dharayate rjnna
prasangena phalakanksi
dhrtih sa partha rajasi*

यया - (By) which, तु - but, धर्मकामार्थान् - duty, pleasure and wealth, धृत्या - by fortitude, धारयते -

holds, अर्जुन - O Arjuna, प्रसंगेन - from attachment, फलाकांक्षी - desirous of the fruit of action, धृतिः - fortitude, सा - that, पार्थ - O Partha, राजसी-Rajasic (passionate).

34. But the “fortitude”, O Arjuna, by which one holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth, from attachment and craving for the fruits of action, that “fortitude,” O Partha, is *Rajasic* (passionate).

The constancy with which one holds fast to duty (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), pleasure (*kama*), encouraged by his growing desire to enjoy the fruit of each of them, is the steadiness or “fortitude” of the *Rajasic* type. It is interesting to note that in the enumeration Krishna avoided *moksha* and has only taken the first three of the “four ends of man” (*purushartha*), for, a *Rajasic* man is satisfied with the other fields of self-effort and has no demand for the spiritual liberation.

The constancy of pursuit in such an individual will be in three fields of duty, wealth and pleasure and he will be pursuing one or the other of them with an extreme desire to enjoy the resultant satisfactions from them. He follows *dharma*, only to gain the heavens; he pursues *artha* so that he may have power here in life; and he pursues *kama* with a firm belief and faith that sensuous objects can give him all satisfactions in his life.

The steadiness with such an “understanding” would come to strive and work in these fields is classified as the *Rajasic Dhriti*.

What is Tamasic Dhriti?

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।

न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥३५॥

35. *yaya svapnam bhayam sokam
visadam madam eva ca
na vimuncati durmedha
dhrtih sa partha tamasi*

यया -(Constancy) By which, स्वप्नम् -sleep, भयम्
- fear, शोकम् - grief, विषादम् - depression, मदम् -con-
ceit or arrogance, एव-indeed, च-and, न-not, विमु-
ञ्चति - abandons, दुर्मेधा - a stupid man, धृतिः - forti-
tude, सा - that, पार्थ- O Partha, तामसी - Tamasic
(dull).

35. The constancy because of which a stupid man
does *not* abandon sleep, fear, grief, depression,
and also arrogance (conceit), that “fortitude”,
O Partha, is Tamasic (dull).

In this stanza we have the description of the dull type
of “fortitude”, and it is not very difficult to undersand it
because a substantial majority of us belong to this type! The
steadiness of purpose with which one does not give up one’s
dreams and imaginations, fears and agitations, griefs and
sorrows, depressions and arrogance, is of the *Tamasic*
type.

The term dream (*Swapna*) is used here to indicate false
fancied imaginations thrown up by a mind that has almost
drowned in sleep. To see things which are not there, delu-

sorily projected by one's own fancy, is called a dream. The dull personalities project upon the world of objects a dreamy value of reality and false joy, and then laboriously strive for gaining them.

Fear (*Bhava*):—Such men of delusion will have many a fancied fear for the future, which of course may never come to pass, but it can efficiently destroy the equilibrium and balance, poise and peace in the individual's life. There are many among us who have the experience of such fears by hundreds in the past. Some fear that they are going to die, but each following day a healthy man wakes up to face the world. Psychologically they are victims of fear-complex. And it is interesting to note that, these men with a constancy, hug on to such complexes.

Grief, depression and arrogance (*Sokam, Vishadam, Madam*):—These again are great channels, through which human vitality gets dissipated. A man of extreme dullness consistently will ever keep on these three within his bosom, and thereby come to suffer a sense of self-depletion and inner exhaustion. "Grief" (*Sokam*), is in general, the painful feelings of disappointment at something that has already happened in the *past*; while "depression" (*Vishadam*) generally reaches our bosom as a result of our despairs regarding the *future*; and "arrogance" (*Madam*) is the sense of lusty conceit with which a foolish man lives his immoral, low life in the *present*.

One who follows these five values of life is termed here by Krishna as a fool (*Durmedha*), and the consistency with which such a fool follows his life of dreams and fears, griefs and despondencies, arrogance and passion, is indicated as the *Dhriti* of the *Tamasic* type

CHART V *The Three Kinds of "Fortitude" (Dhriti)**

<i>The Good (Sattwic)</i>	<i>The Passionate (Rajasic)</i>	<i>The Dull (Tamasic)</i>
<p>The "Fortitude" by which one through <i>Yoga</i> (concentration) controls steadily the activities of the mind, sense-organs-of-action (<i>Pranendriyas</i>) and the organs-of-perception (<i>Indriyas</i>) is the Pure-type of "Fortitude".</p>	<p>The "Fortitude" by which one holds on firmly with attachment to duty (<i>Dharma</i>), pleasure (<i>Kama</i>) and wealth (<i>Artha</i>)-ever desirous of coming to enjoy the future rewards of joy promised by them (fruits-of-action)—is of the Passionate-type.</p>	<p>The "Fortitude" by which a foolish man does not abandon sleep (non-apprehension of reality), fear (fancied fear of something to happen), grief (on something <i>already</i> happened), depression and arrogance (while living the present),—is the Dull-type of "Fortitude".</p>

* Refer the previous 4 Charts. If read together, the charts should give a clear picture of the uniqueness of each of the three personalities, viz. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas.

“Pleasure” also is three-fold according to Guna. Here follows the the three-fold division of “pleasure”, which is the effect of action.

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।

अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥३६॥

36. *sukham tv idanim trividham
srnu me bharatarsabha
abhyasad ramate yatra
duhkhamtam ca nigacchati*

सुखम्—Pleasure, तु—indeed, इदानीम्—now, त्रिविधम्—threefold, शृणु—hear, मे—of Me, भरतर्षभ—O Lord of the Bharatas, अभ्यासात्—from practice, रमते—rejoices, यत्र—in which, दुःखान्तम्—the end of pain, च—and, निगच्छति—(He) attains to,

36. And now hear from me, O Best among the Bharatas, of the threefold pleasure, in which one rejoices by practice and surely comes to the end of pain.

In the logical thought development in this chapter hitherto, we found the three types of the factors that constitute the “impulse of all actions”: (1) the knowledge, (2) the actor and (3) the action. Afterwards, the very motive force in all activity—that not only propels activity, but intelligently controls and directs it—the *Buddhi* and *Dhriti*, have also been shown severally in their different types.

Every “actor” acts in his field guided by his “knowledge” ruled by his “understanding” and maintained by his “fortitude”. The dissection and observation of “work”

is now complete since we have understood the “anatomy and physiology” of work. The “psychology” of work is now being discussed: Why man acts? In fact, every living creature acts propelled by the same instinct, namely, craving for happiness.

With the three constituents of an action—namely, knowledge, agency and action—and helped by the right type of understanding (*Buddhi*) and fortitude (*Dhriti*) every living creature continues acting in the world from the womb to the tomb. To what purpose? Everyone acts for the same goal of gaining happiness, meaning a better sense of fulfilment.

And though the goal be thus the one and the same, (viz., happiness), since different types of constituents go into the make up of our actions, and since we are so different in the texture of our *understanding* and *fortitude*, the path adopted by each one of us is distinctly different from all others. In and through the variety of actions in the universe, all people—the good, the passionate and the dull—seek their own sense of satisfaction.

Since the five component parts that make up an action are each made up of the three different types*, it follows that “happiness” that is gained by the different types must also be different in their texture, perfection and completeness. Here follows the description of the three types of “happiness”.

Through practice (*Abhyasat*), through a familiarity of this complete scheme-of-things within, an individual can, to a large extent, come to diagnose himself and understand the why and the wherefore of all his miseries and thus learn to re-adjust and re-evaluate his life, and thereby can come to end totally or at least alleviate his sorrows.

* Refer the five charts

The closing line of this stanza “In which one delights by long practice and surely comes to the end of his sorrows”, is taken along with the following stanza by some commentators such as Shridhara and Madhusudhana Saraswati. Shri Shankara’s commentary finds no such necessity. It will be keeping in line with the style of discussion adopted by Krishna so far in this chapter, if stanza is taken as an introductory verse, preparing us for the study of the following three stanzas.

What is Sattwic (Pure) happiness ?

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।

तत् सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥३७॥

37. *yet tad agre visam iva
pariname mrtopamam
tat sukham sattvikam proktam
atmabuddhiprasadajam*

यत्-Which, तत्-that, अग्रे-at first, विषम्-poison
इव-like, परिणामे-in the end, अमृतोपमम्-like nectar,
तत्-that, सुखम्-pleasure, सात्त्विकम्-Sattwic, प्रोक्तम्-
is declared (to be), आत्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम्-born of the
purity of one’s own mind due to self-realisation.

37. That which is like poison at first but in the end
like nectar, that pleasure is declared to be
Sattwic (pure), born of the purity of one’s own
mind due to Self-realisation.

That “happiness”, which in the beginning is like poison
and very painful, but which, when it works itself out fulfils
itself in a nectarine success, is the enduring “happiness” of
the good (Sattwic). In short, “happiness” that arises

from consistent effort is the “happiness” that can yield us a greater beauty and a larger sense of fulfilment. The flimsy “happiness” that is gained through sense-indulgence and sense-gratification is a joy that is fleeting, and after its onslaught there is a terrific under-current that comes to upset our equilibrium and to drag us into the depths of despondency.

The joy arising out of the inner self-control and the consequent sense of self-perfection is no cheap gratification. In the beginning it is certainly very painful and extremely arduous. But one who has discovered in oneself the necessary courage and the required heroism to walk the precipitous path of self-purification and inward balance, he comes to enjoy the subtlest of happiness and the all-fulfilling sense of inward peace. This “happiness” (*Sukham*) arising out of self-control and self-discipline is classified here by the Lord as the *Sattwic* “happiness”.

Born out of the purity of one's own mind (*Atma-buddhi Prasadajam*): By carefully living the life of the good (*Sattwic*) and acting in disciplined self-control as far as possible in the world, maintaining the *Sattwic* qualities in all the ‘component parts’, one can develop the ‘Prasad’ of one's inward nature. The term ‘*prasad*’ is very often misunderstood in our ritualistic language.

The peace and tranquillity, the joy and expansion, that the mind and intellect come to experience as a result of their discipline and contemplation are the true “Prasad”. The joy arising out of spiritual practices provided by the integration of the inner nature is called ‘*Prasad*’. The joy arising out of the ‘Prasad’ (*Prasadajam*) is the *Sattwic* “happiness”, according to Lord Krishna. In short, the sense of fulfilment and the gladness of heart that well up from the bosom

of a cultured man, as a result of his balanced and self-disciplined life of high ideals and divine values of life, are the enduring “happiness” of all men of perfection, of all men of true religion.

What is Rajasic (Passionate) happiness ?

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥३८॥

38. *visayendriyasamyogad
yat tad agre mrtopamam
pariname visam iva
tat sukham rajasam smrtam*

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगात् - From the contact of the sense-organ with the object, यत्-which, तत्-that, अग्रे-at first, अमृतोपमम् -like nectar, परिणामे -in the end, विषम् - poison, इव - like, तत् - that, सुखम् - pleasure, राजसम् - Rajasic, स्मृतम् - is declared.

38. That pleasure which arises from the contact of the sense-organ with the object, (which is) at first like nectar, (but is) in the end like poison, that is declared to be *Rajasic* (Passionate).

That happiness which arises in our bosom when the appropriate world-of-objects comes in contact with our sense-organs is indeed a thrill that is nectarine in the beginning but, unfortunately, it cools down as quickly as it comes, dumping the enjoyer into a pit of exhaustion and indeed into a sense of ill-reputed dissipation.

Rajasic “happiness” arises only when the sense-organs are actually in contact with the sense-objects. Unfortu-

nately, this contact cannot be permanently established ; for, the objects are always variable quanta. And the subjective mind and intellect, the instruments that come in contact with the objects, are also variable and changing. With the same appetite the sense-organs cannot afford to embrace the sense-objects at all times, and even if they do so, the very object in the embrace of the sense-organs withers and putrifies, raising the stink of death. No man can *fully* enjoy even the passing glitter of joy that the sense-objects can give to him, for even at the moment of enjoyment the joy-possibility in it gets unfortunately tainted by an anxiety that it may leave him. Thus, to a true thinker the temporary joys of sense-objects are not at all satisfactory since they bury the enjoyer ere long in a tomb of sorrow.

This sort of “ happiness ” is classified as the *Rajaic* type of “ happiness ” which is generally pursued by men of passion.*

What is Tamasic (dull) happiness?

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।

निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥३९॥

39. *yad agre ca nubandhe ca
sukham mohanam atmanah
nidralasyapramadottham
tat tamasam udahrtam*

यत् - Which, अग्रे - at first, च - and, अनुबन्धे - in its consequence, च - and, सुखम् - pleasure, मोहनम् - delusive, आत्मनः - of the Self, निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थम् - aris-

* Refer all the previous five charts.

ing from sleep, indolence and heedlessness, तत्-
that, तामसम् - Tamasic, उदाहृतम् - is declared.

39. That pleasure, which at first and in the sequel
deludes the Self, arising from sleep, indolence
and heedlessness, that pleasure is declared to be
Tamasic (Dull).

The “happiness” of the dull (*Tamasic*) is that which
deludes the higher in us, which vitiates the culture in us.
And when the pursuit for such “happiness” is continued
for a length of time, it gives to the intellect a thick crust
of wrong values and false ideals, and ruins the spiritual
sensitiveness of his personality.

This type of *Tamasic* “happiness” satisfies only mere
sense cravings; for, such *Tamasic* “happiness” arises from
according to the Lord, sleep (*Nidra*), indolence (*Alasya*) and
heedlessness (*Pramada*).

Sleep (*Nidra*): It is not the psychological condition of
the everyday sleep that is meant here. Philosophically the
term “sleep” stands for “the non-apprehension of
Reality”,* and the incapacity of the dull-witted to perceive
any permanent, ever-existing goal of life. This encourages
one to seek after simple sense-gratifications at the flesh level.

Indolence (Alasya). It is the incapacity of the intellect
to think out correctly the problems that face it and come to
the correct judgement. Such an inertia of the intellect
makes it insensitive to the inspiring songs of life and they
are generally tossed here and there by the passing tides of
of instincts and impulses.

*Refer Swamiji's “Discourses on Mandukya-Karika” IV
Chapter.

The Three Types of Happiness

<i>The Good (Satwic)</i>	<i>The Passionate (Rajasic).</i>	<i>The Dull (Tamasic).</i>
<p><i>Satwic</i> "happiness" is the joy arising out of the inner self-control and consequent self-perfection, which look though painful and arduous in the beginning, is enduring in the long run, in contrast with the fleeting joys provided by the sense-ticklings. The result of inner discipline and contemplation brings about tranquillity (<i>prasad</i>) in the intellect and from this tranquillity of the intellect gurgles out a "happiness" which is called <i>Satwic</i> "happiness."</p>	<p>The <i>Rajasic</i> "happiness" arises only when the sense-organs are directly in contact with the sense-objects which in the beginning are quite nectarine and alluring but creates in the enjoyer a sense of exhaustion and dissipation in the long run. Even when one experiences the <i>Rajasic</i> type of "happiness" brought about by the sense-organs, it is tainted by an anxiety of diminution and loss of it. Therefore, the temporary "happiness" provided by the sense-objects is termed as the <i>Rajasic</i> "happiness".</p>	<p>The <i>Tamasic</i> 'happiness' is the joy which takes us away from our real nature, creates cultural morbidity in our inner life and gives the intellect a thick crust of wrong values and false ideals. In the enjoyment of this <i>Tamasic</i> "happiness," the permanent, ever-existing Goal of Life recedes to the back-ground, and this results in seeking simple gratifications at the flesh-level. This kind of pursuit incapacitates the intellect to think out correctly the problems (<i>Alasya</i>) that face it and to arrive at a right judgement. When the intellect is weak, the mind seeks to compromise with the temptations, heedless of the voice of the higher in us (<i>Pramada</i>). Such a "happiness" which deludes the soul, both at the beginning and at the end, is classified as <i>Tamasic</i>.</p>

Heedlessness (Pramada). As every challenge reaches us and demands our response to it, no doubt, the higher in us truly guides our activities but the lower, indolent mind seeks a compromise and tries to act heedless of the voice of the higher. When an individual has thus lived for some time carelessly ignoring the voice of the higher, he becomes more and more removed from his divine perfections. He sinks lower and lower into his animal nature.

When such an individual, who is heedless of the higher calls, indolent at his intellectual level and completely asleep to the existence and the play of the Reality, seeks “happiness”, he only seeks a “happiness” that deludes the soul, both at the beginning and at the end. Such “happiness” is classified by Krishna here as *Tamasic*.

Here follows a stanza which concludes the subject of our present discussion.

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।

सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥४०॥

40. *na tad asti prthivyaṃ va
divi devesu va punah
sattvaṃ prakṛtijair muktam
yad ebhiḥ syat tribhir guṇaiḥ*

न - Not, तत् - that, अस्ति - is, पृथिव्याम् - on the earth, वा - or, दिवि - in heaven, देवेषु - among the Devas (Gods), वा - or, पुनः - again, सत्त्वम् - being, प्रकृतिजैः - born of Prakriti (matter), मुक्तम् - freed, यत् - which, एभिः - from these, स्यात् - may be, त्रिभिः - from three, गुणैः - by qualities.

40. There is no being on earth, or again in heaven among the *Devas* (heavenly beings) that is liberated from the three qualities, born of *Prakriti* (matter).

With the above stanza the exhaustive description of the three *gunas* as impinging upon the personality of all living organisms, is concluded. On the whole this section of the chapter has given as a psychic explanation for the varieties that we meet with in the world of plurality, not only in their personality structure but also in their individual behaviour. So exhaustively the three types of beings have been described—by an analysis of “knowledge,” “action”, “agent”, “understanding” and “fortitude”. This is only for our guidance to know where we stand in our own inner nature and outer manifestation.

If we detect with the above-mentioned slide-scale-rule of personality that we belong to the *Tamasic* or *Rajasic* types’ we, as seekers of cultural expression and growth are to take the warning and strive to heave ourselves into the *Sattwic* state. Remember, and I repeat, remember, these classifications are given, *not so much to classify others*, as to provide us with a ready reckoner to help us in our constant and daily self-analysis and self-discipline.

These three *gunas* have been described because there is no living organism in the world, “*no creature either on earth or again among the Gods in heaven*,” who is free from the influences of these three *gunas*; no living creature can act or work beyond the frontiers provided by these three *Gunas*. Nature (*Prakriti*) itself is constituted of these three *Gunas*; the play of these *Gunas* is the very expression of *Prakriti*.

But at the same time, no two creatures do react to the world outside in the same fashion, because the proportion in which these three *Gunas* come to influence each one of us is different at different times. These three *Gunas* put together are the manifestation of "*Maya*".* Individuals differ from each other because of the different texture of the *Gunas* that come to predominantly rule over them; it is this *maya* that gives them the individuality. An individual cannot at the same time exist without all these three *Gunas*, at least in a meagre negligible percentage.

No sample of "coffee"† is possible without its three ingredients, the decoction, the milk and the sugar, but at the same time, the proportion in which they are mixed up together may be different from cup to cup according to the taste of the partaker. He who has transcended the three *Gunas* comes to experience the very multiple plurality in the world as the one Infinite play. So let us introspect and evaluate ourselves every day, every minute. Let us avoid the lower *Gunas* and steadily work ourselves up towards the achievement of the *Sattwic* state. Only after reaching the status of the good (*Sattwic*) can we usher into the State of Godhood—Perfection Absolute.

With these three measuring rods of the qualities (*Gunas*) Krishna enters in the world of human beings to classify the entire community of man under for distinctly available types. The criterion of this classification is the texture of man's inner equipments which he brings into play for his achievements in his field of activity. Accordingly, the Hindu

* Refer Swamiji's MEDITATION AND LIFE, the chapter on the "Rise and Fall of Man".

† As enjoyed in Indian homes.

scriptures have brought the entire humanity under a four-fold classification. So it is not only in India that it is applicable : it has a universal application.

Certain well defined characteristics determine the types of these four classes in human nature; they are not determined always by heredity, the accident of birth. They are termed in our society as the *Brahmins*—(with a major portion of *Sattwa* and a little *Rajas* and with minimum *Tamas*), the *Kshatriyas*—(mostly *Rajas*, with some *Sattwa*, and a dash of *Tamas*), the *Vaisyas*—(with more *Rajas*, less *Sattwa* and some *Tamas*), and the *Sudras*—(mostly *Tamas*, little *Rajas* with only a suspicion of *Sattwa*).

THE FOUR VARNAS

Gunas	Brahmana ↓	Khatriya ↓	Vaisya ↓	Sudra ↓
Sattwa ...	80 per cent	15 per cent	5 per cent	5 per cent
Rajas ...	15 per cent	80 per cent	80 per cent	5 per cent
Tamas ...	5 per cent	5 per cent	15 per cent	90 per cent

The Chart explains the composition of Gunas in the four psychological types of men, wherein the figures stand for the varying percentage of gunas (a rough quantitative picture) in the composition of each type of personality.

This four-fold classification is universal and for all times. Even today it holds good. In the modern language, the four types of people may be called (1) Creative thinkers (2) the politicians, (3) the commercial employers and

(4) the labour (the proletarians). We can easily recognise how each subsequent classification holds in awe and reverence the previous higher class—the employers are afraid of the employees, the commercial men are suspicious of the politicians and the politicians tremble at the independent, courageous thinkers.

By the following stanzas and the discussions contained in them, in the immediate context of the Krishna-Arjuna-summit talks, the Lord is only trying to make Arjuna understand that his inner equipment is such as it can be classified only as a *Kshatriya*. And being a *Kshatriya* his duty is to fight for the right and thus establish the righteous. He cannot with profit retire to the jungle and meditate for self-unfoldment, as the Pandava prince wanted, since he will have to first of all grow into the status of the *Sattwic* personality (Brahmin) before he could successfully strive on the path of total retirement and a life of rewarding contemplation. Therefore, with the available texture of mind and intellect, the only spiritual *sadhana* left the Arjuna was to act vigorously in the field of contention that had reached him unasked. Thereby he could exhaust his existing *vasanas* of *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

In the following stanzas the duties ordained by one's nature (Swabhava) and one's station in life (Swadharma) are laid out with the thoroughness of a law book.

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।

कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥४१॥

41. *brahmanaksatriyavisam
sudranam ca paramtapa
karmani pravibhaktani
svabhavaprabhavair gunaih*

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशाम् - Of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, शूद्राणाम् - of Sudras, च - as also, परंतप - O Parantapa, कर्माणि - duties, प्रविभक्तानि - are distributed, स्वभावप्रभवैः - born of their own nature, गुणैः - by qualities.

41. Of Scholars (Brahmanas), leaders (Kshatriyas) and traders (Vaishyas), as also of workers (Sudras), O Parantapa, the duties are distributed according to the qualities born of their own nature.

After dealing with the various *Gunas* in the preceding stanzas, Krishna now applies them to the social fabric of humanity and thus intelligently classifies the entire mankind under four distinct heads: The Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras.

Different types of duties are assigned to each of these classes of individuals depending upon their nature (*swabhava*), which in its turn is ordered by the proportions of the “*gunas*” in the make-up of each type of inner equipment. The duties prescribed to the individual type depend upon the manifestation of the inner ruling *Gunas*, as expressed in the individual’s contact with the world and activities in the society. The good and the bad are not diagnosed by merely examining the texture of the persons’s skin or the colour of his hair; an individual is judged only by his expressions in life and by the quality of his contacts with the world outside. These alone can reflect one’s inner personality—the quality and texture of the contents of one’s mind-intellect.

After testing and determining the quality of the inner personality the individuals in the community are classified,

and different types of duties are prescribed for each. Naturally, the duties prescribed for a *Brahmin* are different from those expected of a *Kshatriya*; and the work of the *Vaisya* and *Sudra*-class should necessarily be different from the *Brahmin* and the *Kshatriya*-type. The sastra describes the duties of each, by pursuing which, the preponderating *Tamas* can be evolved into *Rajas*, which, in its turn, grow to become the *Sattwic*. And even then the seeker must wait for the sublimation of *Sattwa* when alone the final experience of the Infinite is gained.

By observing a person* one can conclude as to which classification he belongs—whether to *Brahmin*, or *Kshatriya* or *Vaisya* or *Sudra* class. In this context when we say a man is *Sattwic*, it only means that the *Sattwic* qualities are more predominant in him; even in the most *Sattwic* of persons at times the *Rajasic* and the *Tamasic* qualities can and will show up; so too even in the most *Tamasic* man *Sattwa* and *Rajas* will necessarily show up some times.

Today, as they are now worked out in India, these four classifications, have lost much of their meaning. They have become merely a hereditary birth-right in the society, a mere physical distinction that divides the society up into castes and castes. A true *Brahmin* is necessarily a highly cultured man (*Sattwic*) who can control his sense-organs readily, and with perfect mastery over his mind can raise himself through contemplation into the highest peaks of meditation upon the Infinite. But today's *Brahmin*

* The type of a man's "actions", the quality of his "ego" the colour of his "knowledge," the texture of his "understanding," the temper of his "fortitude," and the brilliancy of his "happiness" will determine his varna.

is one who is claiming his distinction, and alas ! he gets no reverence, because he has not striven to deserve it.

Answering the four types of nature, as determined by their psychological characteristics, there are four kinds of social living, each having a definite function in society: they are described below.

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४२॥

42. *Samo damas tapah saucam
ksantir arjavam eva ca
jnanam vijnanam astikyam
brahmakarma svabhavajam*

शमः - Serenity, दमः - self-restraint, तपः - austerity, शौचम् - purity, क्षान्ति - forgiveness, अर्जवम् - uprightness, एव - even, च - and, ज्ञानम् - knowledge, विज्ञानम् - realisation, आस्तिक्यम् - belief in God, ब्रह्मकर्म - (are) the duties of Brahmanas, स्वभावजम् - born of nature.

42. Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness and also uprightness, knowledge, realisation, belief in God are the duties of the *Brahmanas*, born of (their own) nature.

Herein we have a detailed enumeration of the duties of a *Brahmin* born out of his own predominantly *Sattwic* nature. Serenity (*Sama*), is one of his duties. *Sama* is controlling the mind away from running into the world-of-objects seeking the sense-enjoyment. Even if the world-of-

objects is physically shut off by carrying ourselves away from the tumults and temptations of life into a quiet lonely place, even there our minds can stride forth into the sense-fields through the memories of our past indulgences. To consciously control this instinctive flow of the mind towards the sense-objects is called *Sama*.

Self control (*Dama*): Controlling the sense-organs, which are the gateways through which the external world of stimuli infiltrate into our mental domain and marr our peace, is called *Dama*. A man of *Dama* even if he be in the midst of the sensuous objects, is not disturbed by them. A true Brahmin is one whose duty is to practise constantly both *Sama* and *Dama*, serenity and self control.

Austerity (*Tapas*): Conscious physical self-denial in order to economise the expenditure of human energy so lavishly spent in the wrong channels of sense indulgence, and conserving it for reaching the higher unfoldment within is called *Tapas*. By the practice of *Sama* and *Dama*, the *Brahmin* will be steadily controlling both his sense-onrush and the mind-wandering. This process helps him to conserve his inner vitality which would have been otherwise spent in hunting for the sense joys. This conserved energy is utilised for reaching the higher flights in meditation. These subjective processes of economising, conserving, and redirecting one's own energies within is called *Tapas*. It is Brahmin's duty to live in *Tapas*.

Purity (*Saucham*). The Sanskrit term used here includes the external cleanliness and the internal purity. Habits of cleanliness in one's personal life and surroundings are the governing conditions in the life of one who is practising both *Sama* and *Dama*. The practice of *Tapas* makes him

such a disciplined person that he cannot stand any disorderly confusion or state of neglect around and about him. An unclean person living in the midst of things thrown about in a disorderly manner is certainly a man of slothful nature and slovenly habits. It is the duty of the Brahmin to keep himself ever clean and pure.

Forbearance (*Kshanti*): To be patient and forgiving and thus to live, without struggling against even wrongs done against him, is "forbearance"—a duty of the *Brahmin*. Such an individual will never harbour any hatred for anyone; he lives equanimous in the face of both the good and the bad.

Uprightness (*Arjavam*): This is a quality which makes an individual straightforward in all his dealings, and his uprightness makes him fearless in life. He is afraid of none, and he makes no compromise of the higher calls with the lower murmurings.

Cultivating the above six qualities—serenity (*Sama*), self-control (*Dama*), austerity (*Tapas*), purity (*Saucham*), forbearance (*Shanthi*), and straightforwardness (*Arjavam*)—and expressing them in all his relationship with the world outside is the life-long duty of a Brahmin. These above mentioned six artistic strokes paint a *Brahmin* on the stage of the world when he is dealing with things and beings that constitute the various situations in life. The Lord enumerates in the stanza three more duties of a *Brahmin* which are the rules of conduct controlling his spiritual life.

Knowledge (*Jnanam*): The theoretical knowledge of the world, of the structure of the equipments of experience and their behaviour, while coming in contact with the outer world, of the highest goal of life, of the nature of the spirit,

and in short knowledge of all that the Upanishads deal with—is meant here by the term *Jnanam*.

Wisdom (*Vijnanam*) : If the theoretical knowledge is *Jnanam* the technical knowledge or personal experience is called *Vijnanam*. Knowledge digested and assimilated brings home to man an inward experience, and thereafter, he comes to live his life, guided by this deep inner experience called “wisdom”. Knowledge can be imparted, but “wisdom” is to be found by the individual in himself. When a student discovers in himself the enthusiasm to live the knowledge gained by his studies, then from the field of his lived experiences rises “wisdom”—*Vijnanam*.

Faith (*Astikyam*) : Unless one has a deep faith in what one has studied and lived, the living itself will not be enthusiastic and full. This ardency of conviction, that is the motive-force behind one who wills to live what one has understood, is the secret sustaining power that converts knowledge steadily into “wisdom”. This inward order, this intellectual honesty, this subtle unfatiguing enthusiasm, is called “faith”.

To grow and steadily cultivate knowledge, wisdom and faith are the sacred duties of a *Brahmin* in the spiritual side of his life.

What are duties of a Kshatriya?

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।

दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥४३॥

43. *sauryam tejo dhrtir daksyam*
yuddhe ca py apalayanam
danam isvarabhavas ca
ksatram karma svabhavaajam

शौर्यम्—Prowess, तेजः – splendour, धृतिः—firmness, दाक्ष्यम्—dexterity, युद्धे—in battle, च—and, अपि—also, अपलायनम्—not flying, दानम्—generosity, ईश्वरभावः – lordliness, च—and, क्षात्रम्—of Kshatriyas, कर्म—action, स्वभावजम्—born of nature.

43. Prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, and also not flying from battle, generosity, lordliness—these are the duties of the *Kshatriyas*, born of (their own) nature.

The *Kshatriyas* are those who have a greater dose of Rajoguna in the composition of their personality. A *Kshatriya* is not defined by Lord Krishna directly as the legal son of another *Kshatriya* but, on the other hand, He enumerates a series of qualities and behaviour noticed in a truly kingly personality. In the Geeta the four castes are described in terms of their manifested individuality, when coming in contact with the world-of-objects—the field of expression. In all these descriptions we meet with details of the individual's physical, mental and intellectual reactions to his moral life.

“Prowess and Boldness” (*Sauryam*) and (*Tejjah*)—meaning the vigour and consistency with which he meets his challenges in life. He who has the above two qualities, heroism and vigour of pursuit, certainly becomes a commanding personality.

Fortitude (*Dhirti*): It was already explained in the earlier stanzas. Herein as applied to a *Kshatriya*, it is the powerful will of the personality, which, having decided to do something, pursues the path and discovers in himself the necessary drive and consistency of purpose to meet and if necessary break down all the obstacles until he reaches victory or success.

Promptitude (*Dakshyam*). The Sanskrit equivalent for the Army parade-ground command "attention" is *Dakshyam*. This quality of alertness and smart vigilance is indeed *Dakshyam*. In the context here it means that the *Kshatriya* is one who is prompt in coming to decisions and in executing them completely. Such an individual is industrious and has an enviable amount of perseverance however hazardous the field of his activity may be.

Not fleeing from battle—One who has all the above qualities can never readily accept defeat in any field of conflict. He will not leave any work half done and retire. Since Krishna is here generally classifying the entire living creatures according to the *Gunas* predominant in them, these terms should be understood in their greatest amplitude of suggestion. No doubt, a true warrior should not step backward in a field of battle; but such literal interpretation is only partial. The field of battle should include all fields of competition wherein things and situations arrange themselves in opposition to the planned schemes of a man of will and dash. In no such condition can a true *Kshatriya* feel nervous. He never leaves a field where he has entered, and if at all he leaves, he leaves with the crown of success!

"Generosity" (*Daram*): Governments or Rajas cannot be popular unless they loosen their purse strings. Even

in modern days, every Government budget in all democratic countries has amounts allocated under heads which are not discussed and voted. A man of action cannot afford to be miserly since his success would depend upon his influence on a large number of friends and supporters. The glory of a prince is in his compassion for others who are in need of his help.

Lordliness (*Ishwarabhava*): In leadership it is always a rule that without self-confidence in one's own abilities one cannot lead others. A leader must have such an all-consuming faith in himself that he must be able to reinforce other frail hearts around with his own self-confidence. Thus lordliness is one of the unavoidable traits in a *Kshatriya*. He must be wafting all around a fragrance of brilliancy and dynamism, electrifying the atmosphere that he comes to rule. A king is not made by his golden robes or bejewelled crowns. The crown, the robe and the throne have a knack of electing for themselves a true wearer. Lordliness is the watchword of the *Kshatriya*.

These eight qualities—bravery, vigour, consistency resourcefulness, promptitude, courage in the face of the enemy, generosity and lordliness—are here enumerated by the Lord as duties of a *Kshatriya*, meaning that it is the duty of a true man of action to cultivate, maintain and express these traits in him. Leaders of men and affairs in no society can ever come to claim to be at once the spiritual leaders of the people. The secular heads cannot be the spiritual guides. But a true leader is one who has the subtle ability to incorporate the spiritual ideals of our culture into the work-a-day life and maintain them in the community in all its innumerable fields of activity.

The duties of the Vaisyas and Sudras are described in the following :

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।

परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥४४॥

44. *krsigauraksyavanijjam*
vaisyakarma svabhavajam
paricaryatmakam karma
sudrasya pi svabhavajam

कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यम्—Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade, वैश्यकर्म—the duties of Vaishya, स्वभावजम्—born of the nature, परिचर्यात्मकम्—consisting of service, कर्म—action, शूद्रस्य—of the Sudra, अपि—also, स्वभावजम्—born of the nature.

44. Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the *Vaishyas*, born of (their own) nature ; and service is the duty of *Sudras*, born of (their own) nature.

Since each mind and intellect equipment is governed and ruled over by its predominating quality (*Guna*) each equipment has its own nature to reckon with. A vehicle that can efficiently work in one medium of transport cannot with the same efficiency work in another medium ; a car is efficient on road—but on waters? The *Rajasic* mind cannot fly into meditation and maintain its poise as easily and beautifully as the *Sattwic* mind can. Similarly, in the field in which *Kshatriya* can outshine everybody, a *Vaisya* or a *Sudra* cannot play with the same efficiency. To rise to the highest station in the social life all men cannot have *identical*

opportunities. A social system can only give "equal opportunities" for all its members to develop their gifts in and through life. In order to prove this thesis, the various duties are prescribed that would help moulding the personality of the different types of man.

"Agricultural, cattle breeding and tending, trade and commerce" are the three fields in which the *Vaisya* can function inspiredly and exhaust his imperfections. These are duties towards which he has an aptitude because of his own nature. Work in a spirit of dedication and *service is the duty of a Sudra*.

The mental temperament of a man determines what class he belongs to and each class has been given particular duties to perform in the world. If a man who is fit temperamentally for one type of work is entrusted with a different type of activity, he will not only bring chaos in the field, but also in himself. For example, if a *Kshatriya* were asked to fan, in a spirit of service, he may condescend to do so, but when watched one will find him ordering somebody else at once, almost instinctively, to fetch a fan for him. So too, if a man of commercial temperament, a *Vaisya*, comes to serve as a temple-priest, the sacred place will become ere long worse than a trading centre; so also, let them become heads of any government, they will, out of sheer instinct, begin doing business from the seats of governmental authority!

We must analyse, watch, and determine the type of *Vasanas* and temperaments that predominate in each one of us and determine what types we are. None belonging to the higher groups has any justification to look down with contempt upon others who are of the lower types. Each

one serves the society as best as he can. Each one must work with a spirit of dedication for his own evolution and sense of fulfilment. When each one thus works according to his *Vasanas* in him, and fully devotes his attention to his prescribed duties, it is said here that he will develop within himself, and attain in stages the ultimate Perfection.

When one works devotedly, in the proper field and in the right environment, which is best suited to him, he will be exhausting the existing *Vasanas* in him. And when the *Vasanas* are reduced he will experience tranquillity and peace within, and it becomes possible for him to discover more and more concentration and single-pointed contemplation. With these faculties in him he can ultimately reach the State of Perfection : The Life in the Self.

How ?

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥४५॥

45. *sve-sve karmanya abhiratah
samsiddhim labhate narah
svakarmaniratah siddhim
yatha vindati tac chrnu*

स्वे-In one's own, स्वे-in one's own, कर्मणि-to duty, अभिरतः - devoted, संसिद्धिम्-perfection, लभते-attains, नरः - a man, स्वकर्मनिरतः - engaged in his own duty, सिद्धिम्-perfection, यथा-how, विन्दति-finds, तत्-that, शृणु-listen.

45. Devoted each to his own duty, man attains perfection. How engaged in his own duty, he attains perfection, that listen.

“ *Each devoted to his own duty, man attains perfection* ”: By being loyal to our own level of feeling and ideas, to our own development of consciousness, we can evolve into higher states of self-unfoldment.

The truth of this classification of mankind, may not be very obvious, if we observe them only superficially. But the biography of all great men of action declares repeatedly the irrevocable precision with which this law of life works itself out in the human affairs. A tiny Corsican boy who was asked to tend his sheep refused to do so and reached Paris, to become one of the great men the world had ever seen. And that was Napoleon! A Goldsmith would rather compose his metres in a garret than take up a commercial job, courting prosperity and comfortable life! Each one is ordered by his own *Swabhava* and each can discover his fulfilment only in that self-ordered field of activity.

By thus working in the field ordered by one's own *Vasanas*, if one can live the field, surrendering one's ego and ego-centric desires to enjoy the fruits, one can thereby achieve a sense of fulfilment and a great peace arising out of the exhaustion of the *Vasanas*. The renunciation of ego and its desires can never be accomplished unless there is a spirit of dedication and total surrender to the Infinite. When this unbroken awareness of the Lord becomes a constant habit for the mind, dedication becomes effective and mind's evolution starts.

Such an intelligent classification of the human beings, on the basis of their physical behaviour, psychological structure and intellectual aptitude is not applicable to India alone. As a Gerald Heard would say. “ The Aryan-Sanskrit sociological thought, which first defined and named its four-fold structure of society, is as much ours as India's ”. This

four-fold classification is universal, both in its application in life and its implication in the cultural development of man.

*How can one devoted to one's own duty attain perfection?
“ That do thou hear ” says Lord Krihana.*

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥४६॥

46. *yatsh pravrttir bhutanam
yena sarvam idam tatam
svakarmana tam abhyarcya
siddhim vindati manavah*

यतः- From whom, प्रवृत्तिः-(is) the evolution, भूतानाम्-of beings, येन-by whom, सर्वम्-all, इदम्-this, ततम्-is pervaded, स्वकर्मणा-with his own duty, तम्-him, अभ्यर्च्य-worshipping, सिद्धिम्-perfection, विन्दति-attains, मानवः-man.

46. From Whom is the evolution of all beings, by Whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, man attains perfection.

In this chapter the four-fold classification of men and the duties of the individuals belonging to each classification are given. When a man acts according to his nature (*Swabhava*), and station in life (*Swadharma*) his *Vasanas* get exhausted. This exhaustion of the load of *Vasanas* within and the consequent sense of joy and relief can be gained only when one learns to work and achieve, in a spirit of total self-surrender.

By constantly remembering the higher goal towards which we are working out our way, if we do our work most

efficiently, this *Vasana*-exhaustion comes to pass. The goal to be constantly remembered is indicated in this stanza : “ *He from Whom all beings arise and by Whom all this is pervaded* ”. The three equipments, the body, the mind and the intellect, that flutter out into activity are all in themselves inert matter with no consciousness in themselves. It is only at the touch of the Light of Life that the inert matter starts singing its *Vasanas* through the various activities.

To remember constantly, this Consciousness, the Atman,—the Atman that lends, as it were its dynamism to the matter that invests it in its activities—is to stand apart from all agitations in the field of strife. Such a man is never caught on the wrong foot in life : just as a musician constantly conscious of the background hum, sings his songs easily in tune ; just as a dancer dances with felicity to the rhythm of the drum. A new glow of tranquil peace and dynamic love comes to shine through all his action and his achievements come to glitter conspicuously with the shadowless light of Perfection, which is not certainly of the earth.

Work can thus be changed into worship by attuning our minds, all through our activity, to the consciousness of the Self. A self-dedicated man so working in the consciousness of the Supreme, is the one who pays the greatest homage to his Creator. This subtle change in attitude transforms the shape of even the most dreary situation. Even the most dreadfully cruel field of activity is converted into a sacred chamber of devotion—into a silent hall of prayer—into a quiet seat of meditation.

By setting thus one’s hands and feet to work in the field-of-objects with one’s mind and intellect held constantly conscious of the Presence, one can attain “ *through the performance of one’s own duties the highest Perfection* ”. Work

has fulfilment to give us apart from its legitimate “fruits”. The inner personality gets integrated, and such an integrated person grows in his meditation and evolves quickly.

“*And yet, why not I go and meditate?*” seems to be the honest doubt in Arjuna’s mind : Krishna answers :

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥४७॥

47. *sreyan svadharmo vigunah
paradharmat svanusthitat
svabhavaniyatam karma
kurvan na pnoti kilbisam*

श्रेयान्—Better, स्वधर्मः – one’s own duty, विगुणः – (though) destitute of merits, परधर्मात्—than the duty of another, स्वनुष्ठितात्—(than) well performed, स्वभावनियतम्—ordained by his own nature, कर्म—action, कुर्वन्—doing, न—not, आप्नोति—(he) incurs, किल्बिषम्—sin.

47. Better is one’s own duty (though) destitute of merits, than the duty of another well-performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin.

The opening line of this stanza was exhaustively discussed earlier*. To work in any field ordered by one’s own *Vasanas* is better, because, in that case there is a chance for the existing *Vasanas* to exhaust. When an individual strives in a field contrary to the existing *Vasanas*, he not only fails

* Refer Chapter III. Stanza 35—Discourses on Geeta by Swam Chinmayananda, Vol: I, page 352.

to gain any exhaustion of the existing *Vasanas*, but also creates a new load of *Vasanas* in his temperament. Hence it is said here “*Better is one’s own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another well-performed.*”

By performing “duties ordained by one’s own nature” (*Swabhava Niyatam Karma*) the individual comes to know no evil—meaning the individual has no chance of imprinting any new impression on his mind—the impressions in their maturity might force him out to strive, to seek, to achieve and to indulge.

This closing chapter of the Geeta is a peroration of the beautiful discourse of the inspired Divine and it is, naturally therefore, a summary of the whole Geeta. Hence we read here almost all the salient ideas which have been discussed earlier, and which are very important for the cure of the “Arjuna disease”.*

Very many students find it difficult to accept this idea readily. They feel that a ready ideal-pattern must be insisted upon, with a totalitarian force of vehemence upon the entire society, and that community must be herded into a disciplined, choiceless, dead, geometrical design. Unfortunately, man is dynamically mobile and in his surging onrush, the irresistible flood of his ideas and ideals will shatter the pattern even if death and disaster were to befall on him. The nature within and without is a mighty power.

And yet, the doubters would come to feel, perhaps, the logic of it ** if they consider the following: (1) the corrod-

* Refer Introduction to Geeta in Vol. I.

** The logic behind the assertion in the stanza is this that by performing one’s own duties ordained by one’s own nature the individual comes to no evil

ing poison in the fangs of a serpent never kills the serpent. (2) living organisms crawling in fermented wine never get drunk ; (3) the malarial germs in the mosquitoes cannot attack them with shivering fevers appearing in perfect cycles. The *Swabhava* of each one cannot destroy him. If the poison is drawn from the fangs and the wine is poisoned, the crawling organisms die. Similarly, if the *Kshatriyas* were to perform the duties prescribed for the *Brahmin*-type of equipment, they would be only doing Harikari. Arjuna was a Kshatriya : retiring from the battle-field to a jungle for meditation would have destroyed him.

In short, it is no use employing our minds in fields which are contrary to our nature. Everyone has a precise place in the scheme of created things. Each one has an importance and none is to be despised, for each can do something which the others cannot do so well. There is no redundancy in the Lord's creation : not even a single blade of grass is unnecessarily created.

Everything has a purpose. Not only the good, but the bad also, remember, is His manifestation and serves His purpose. The Pandavas' glory is no doubt great, but the manifestation of the wickedness in the Kauravas is also the glory of His creation. Without the latter, the history of the former would not be complete. Nothing is to be condemned ; none to be despised. Every thing is He. And He alone IS.

But the duty to which we are bound, is, in case, riddled with evil, are we to follow it? Krishna answers :

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥४८॥

48. *sahajam karma kaunteya*
sadosam api na tvajet
sarvarambha hi dosena
dhumena gnir iva vrtah

सहजम्-Which is inborn, कर्म-action, कौन्तेय-O Kaunteya, सदोषम्-with fault, अपि-even, न-not, त्यजेत् - one should abandon, सर्वारम्भाः-all undertakings, हि-for, दोषेण - by evil, धूमेन-by smoke, अग्निः - fire, इव-like, आवृताः - are enveloped.

48. One should not abandon, O Kaunteya, the duty to which one is born, though faulty ; for, all undertakings are enveloped by evil, as fire by smoke.

After explaining this much about the nature (*Swabhava*) and the corresponding station in life (*Swadharma*) Krishna builds up the idea to a subtle climax. His advice is general and it is meant for all people of all times, in all situations. Even when the work (*Sahajam Karma*) so ordained by the existing *Vasanas* is full of evil (*Sadosham*) Krishna's advice is that one should not relinquish it (*Na Tyajet*).

Superficially reading this declaration in a hurry, one is apt to think that this is not spiritualism. But to a careful thinker the term "born with" (*Sahajam*) resolves the riddle. There is an ocean of difference, of course, between the phrases "born with" and "born into". Krishna is saying that one should not renounce actions which are ordered by the evil *Vasanas* born with the individual. But the Lord has not said that one should pursue the evil action one is born into.

There are two forces that control and guide, define and determine our actions—(i) the impulses brought forth by the pressure of the mental temperaments within and (ii) the pressure of environments that tickles new temptations in ourselves. One is to follow faithfully the subjective *Vasanas*, even if they be defective. But at the same time we must courageously renounce all the demands that the objective world makes upon us from without.

The *Vasanas* born *with* are to be lived through, without ego and desire; while the *Vasana*-creating atmosphere *into* which one is born should not be allowed to contaminate one's personality. In short, Krishna is very careful in indicating that a spiritual seeker must constantly strive hard to stand apart from the shackling effects of the environments. According to the Geeta, man is the master of circumstances. To the extent he comes to assert this mastery, to that extent he is evolved.

In fact “*all actions (works) are clouded by defects as fire by the smoke*”. Here the term used, to indicate “work” (*Arambha*), is very important. This Sanskrit term *Arambha* means “beginning.” The term was used earlier* where also we were asked to “*renounce the sense of agency in activity*”. When there is an ego-centric sense of self-arrogation, “I-am-the-doer” sense, there is invariably creation of new *Vasanas*, and, therefore, it is full of defects (*Dosha*).

This defect is unavoidable as the appearance of smoke in fire. The more an oven is ventilated with the atmospheric

* Refer Swamiji's Discourses on Geeta Vol : II (Part B) Chapter XII, Stanza 16, page 270—274.

air, the less smoky becomes the fire burning therein. The more our inner bosom is ventilated with the Consciousness Divine, the less would the ego assert, and, therefore, no defects can come to pollute the actions. If there is an influx of wrong *Vasanas* within, the earlier we exhaust them through action—but without any ego or ego-centric desire of enjoying them—the quicker shall the load of existing *Vasanas* be lifted from our personality.

That is the benefit of thus acting according to the temperaments with which one is born?

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥४९॥

49. *asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra
jitatma vigatasprah
naiskarmyasiddhim paramam
samnyasena dhigacchati*

असक्तबुद्धिः—Whose intellect is unattached, **सर्वत्र**—everywhere, **जितात्मा**—who has subdued his self, **विगतस्पृहः**—whose desires have fled, **नैष्कर्म्य-सिद्धिम्**—the perfection consisting in freedom from action, **परमाम्**—the supreme, **संन्यासेन**—through renunciation, **अधिगच्छति**—(he) attains.

49. He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his self, from whom desire has fled, he, through renunciation, attains the supreme state of freedom from action.

It must be remembered that the entire Geeta is addressed to Prince Arjuna standing confused at the immensity of his duty. He wants to run away to the jungle and live in a spirit of what he understands as 'renunciation'. Lord Krishna's thesis in the entire Geeta is that a *mere* running away from life and its duties is not *Sannyas* or renunciation. Here in the stanza the Lord is defining the State of Actionlessness (*Naishkarmya-Siddhi*). This state is reached when we do not identify with the equipments of matter which are the instruments of perception, feelings and thoughts. Detaching ourselves from these three instruments of false interpretation of Truth (Body, Mind and Intellect) to regain our life in Pure Consciousness is the Supreme.

When we forget our spiritual dignity, the misconception of the ego* arises; we lose our real personality and come to believe that we are merely the limited ego. Such self forgetfulness can be observed in any drunken reveller. He forgets his individual personality and status in life and assumes to himself a false identity and continues to be in it so long as he is in that state of intoxication. In his false concept of himself, the drunken fool acts disgracing his education and station in life.

The ego arises when we are ignorant and forgetful of our spiritual nature. When this ignorance is ended, there is the experience of the Infinite Bliss of the All-Full Consciousness. Naturally, there is no want felt, and, therefore, no desires arise. Where desires are absent the thought-

* Ego is the perceiver + the feeler + the thinker, who are the products of the past experiences, at the body, mind and intellect levels.

bleedings end; when thoughts are dried-up, actions, which are the parade of thoughts, marching out through the archway of the body, are no more. This state is called “Actionlessness”—*Naishkarmya-Siddhi*.

The Supreme State described so elaborately in the Upanishadic literature, and indicated here by the technical term ‘*Naishkarmya-Siddhi*’, is that state of being wherein there is no ignorance. Desires are the children of ignorance; thoughts arise from desires; actions are thoughts expressed in the outer world. In the spirituo-psychology of Vedanta we may thus say that the ignorance is the great-grand-father of action. With the knowledge of the Spirit the ignorance ends, and in that State thoughts and actions cannot be. This is the State of Full-Awakening and, with reference to its previous condition as expressed and manifested through the body, this condition is indicated as “Actionlessness” or “THOUGHTLESS-NESS or Desireless-ness”.

The Geetacharya in this stanza declares that this State of Perfection, defined as the State of Actionless-ness, cannot be gained by a cheap and ignominious escape from fields of life’s activities. Making use of the fields, we must gain a self-purity by getting rid of the existing *Vasanas*, through selfless activities, which are prescribed to each one of us according to the type into which we comfortably fall. Arjuna being a “Kshatriya” his duty is to fight, and by fighting alone will he exhaust his *Vasanas*. By the renunciation of our *Vasanas* alone can we hope to reach the Supreme State of Pure Awareness ere long.

“An understanding unattached everywhere” (*Asakta-buddhih Sarvatra*): An intellect that is attached to sensuous things of the world outside knows no peace within itself. It

gets agitated and the frail body gets shattered as the fuming mind escapes through it in its hunt for satisfaction among the sense-objects. A 'clean-shaven intellect',* devoid of all the cob-webs of attachments with the equipments of perception, feeling and thinking, and their respective objects, perceived, felt or thought of, is the vehicle that stands dissolved revealing That which pulsates through them all. This is the true State of Actionless-ness and a man who has earlier disciplined his intellect alone can come to attain it.

In the case of Arjuna, his tall talks of detachment and renunciation were false urges of escapism paraded as an angelic urge. His *Sannyas* is arising out of his "attachment" to his kith and kin, and kingdom; true *Sannyas* must arise out of "detachment".

"One who has subdued his ego" (*Jitatma*): An intellect of complete detachment is an impossible dream. The seeker subdues his heart which ever seeks its flickering joys in sense-gratifications. This self-mastery of the mind is impossible so long as there is even a minutest trace of desire in him. One from whom all desires have fled, (*Vigata-sprihah*) alone can subdue the mind, and such a seeker alone can accomplish the state of complete detachment of his intellect from the world of sense-objects.

Mind is the seat of all vanities of agency, like "I am the doer" sense (*Kartৃত्वा-bhavana*). Intellect is the seat

* Hence the symbolism of clean shaven head in *Sannyas*. This is also the symbolism in keeping a tuft on the crown of the head before a Brahmin boy is taken near (*Upanayana*) a teacher; the Brahmachari has snapped off all his attachments and maintains only one single faithful attachment to the Supreme.

of all false arrogations that “I-am-the-enjoyer” (*Bhoktrittwa-bhavana*). These two together make up the ego and it is fed, nurtured and nourished by its clinging attachments (*spruha*) to the joy that is in the objects of the world outside. By correct analysis and investigations when the “*spruha*” is dried up, both the enjoyer-ship and doership will get steadily sublimated leaving behind the Infinite experience of the Self. The Geeta is never tired of repeating that self-restraint and freedom from desire are the unavoidable pre-requisites for spiritual growth. Herein we have a beautiful example of explaining the Supreme Goal, not in the positive language of achieving any higher state, but it is described here as the state of complete detachment from the lower urges.

Freedom from action is a condition in which alone can the experiences of the Supreme Being, rush in. How?, “learn from Me in brief”:

सिद्धिं प्राप्नो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे ।

समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥५०॥

50. *siddhim prapto yatha brahma
tatha pnoti nibodha me
samasenai va kaunteya
nistha jnanasya ya para*

सिद्धि-Perfection, प्राप्तः-attained, यथा-as, ब्रह्म-Brahman, (the Eternal), तथा-that, आप्नोति-Ob-tains, निबोध-learn, मे-of Me, समासेन-in brief, एव-even, कौन्तेय-O Kaunteya, निष्ठा-state, ज्ञानस्य-of knowledge, या-or, परा-highest.

50. How he who has attained perfection reaches Brahman (the Eternal), that in brief do you learn from Me, O, Kaunteya, that Supreme State of Knowledge.

Here we are told how we get ourselves detached from the wrong tendencies in life and how to that extent we attain serenity and composure. 'Detachment from matter-hallucinations itself is the rediscovery of the spiritual beauty. The following few stanzas make a beautiful section of this Chapter which refreshingly reminds us of the various descriptions of a Man of Perfection that were given throughout the Lord's Song. When we thus get purified, meaning when our intellect becomes free from its attachments, and our mind and body come well under the control of our intellect, then alone are we fit for the Path of Meditation which is the process of accomplishing and fulfilling renunciation of the lower, base, ego-sense.

It is not possible to renounce all attachments completely, unless one experiences the Truth and thereby becomes the Infinite Self. Our attempt now is to reduce our attachment to the irreducible minimum leaving but the thinnest film of ignorance veiling the Supreme. Krishna here says, "Learn from Me in brief,* Oh! son of Kunti, how to remove this last lingering film of ignorance and thereby get permanently established in that Supreme God-consciousness which is the Self."

*The Lord promises here that He is going to explain this aspect of Self-knowledge (*Adhyatma Vidya*) in brief, because, this technique of Meditation for the final release was exhaustively explained earlier in Chapter V and VI.

The technique of Meditation is being described now. This and the following two stanzas explain what should be the condition of the equipments of perception, feeling and thinking at the time of perfect meditation.

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।

शब्दादीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥५१॥

51. *buddhya visuddhaya yukto
dhṛtya tmanam niyamy co
sabdadin visayams tyaktva
ragadvesau vyudasya ca*

बुद्ध्या-With an intellect, विशुद्धया-pure, युक्तः -
endowed with, धृत्या-by firmness, आत्मानम् - the
Self, नियम्य-controlling, च-and, शब्दादीन्-sound
and other, विषयान्-sense-objects, त्यक्त्वा-relinqui-
shing, रागद्वेषौ-attraction and hatred, व्युदस्य-aban-
doning, च-and.

51. Endowed with a pure intellect, controlling the self
by firmness, relinquishing sound and other
objects and abandoning attraction and hatred ;

“ *Endowed with pure understanding:*” an intellect with-
out *Vasanas* (meaning tendencies of acquiring, possessing
and enjoying sense-objects that had once supplied a sort
of satisfaction). An intellect that has thus purified itself of
all its tendencies of joy-hunting is indicated here by pure
(*Visuddha*) understanding.

“ *Controlling the mind and the senses with fortitude* ”:

These two do the sabotage of the harmony and balance in a meditator when he is in the seat of meditation. The sense-organs at that moment receive a rush of stimuli with which they can disturb the music of meditation in the mind ; or often the mind can topple itself down from its steady concentration, by itself, remembering its own experiences in the past. By controlling both these, which were earlier described as *Sama* and *Dama*, the seeker comes to tune himself up properly. He becomes invulnerable to all such attacks.

The idea of controlling the mind and sense-organs described in the earlier epithet is clearly elucidated in the second line of the stanza. *Renouncing sense-objects* ; controlling the sense-organs means allowing none of the stimuli such as sound, form, touch, taste or smell to infiltrate through their respective gateways of ears, eyes, skin, tongue and the nose. When thus a complete wall-of-understanding has been built around the mind, protecting it from any onslaught from the outer world, the mind can, of its own accord, either dance in some remembered joy, or sob in grief at some expected sorrow—because of its likes and dislikes, loves and hatreds. Therefore, these instinctive impulses of the mind are also to be controlled.

To summarise, a meditator is one who has (1) an intellect purified of all its extrovert desires ; (2) a mind together with the sense-organs well brought under the control of an intellect, so purified ; (3) the sense-organs no more contacting the sense objects ; and (4) the mind that has given up its ideas of likes and dislikes. It is this individual that becomes a successful meditator.

Again :

विविक्तसेवी लघ्वाशी यत वाक्कायमानसः ।

ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥५२॥

52. *viviktasevi laghvasi*
yatavakṣayamanasah
dhyānāyogaparo nityam
vairāgyam samupāśritah

विविक्तसेवी—Dwelling in solitude, **लघ्वाशी**—eat-
ing but little, **यतवाक्कायमानसः**—speech, body and
mind subdued, **ध्यानयोगपरः**—engaged in medita-
tion and concentration, **नित्यम्**—always, **वैराग्यम्**—
dispassion, **समुपाश्रितः**—taking refuge in.

52. Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, speech, body
and mind subdued, always engaged in meditation,
and concentration, taking refuge in dispassion ;

Dwelling in solitude (Viviktah-Sevi) : A seeker who has
developed all the above mentioned-physical, mental and
intellectual adjustments, must now seek a sequestered spot
of loneliness. This does not mean that he must move out
of a town to a jungle. The term indicates only a spot
wherein there is the least disturbance. Even in the midst of
a market there are moments when it is deserted and quiet.
If the seeker is sincere, he can discover such moments of
complete solitude under his own roof.

Eating but little : Over-indulgence and stuffing oneself
with high nutritive food is fattening the body and thickening
the subtlety of one's intellectual activities. Temperance is
the law for all spiritual students*.

* Refer Discourses on Geeta—Chapter VI—Stanza 17.

Controlling speech, body and mind: Mind cannot be subdued unless the body is brought under the mind's command. Body is constituted of the senses; organs of perception and action. The grossest manifestation of the mind is action, and to control the action is to discipline the mind. The term "speech" used here indicates all sense-actions and the term 'body' represents "the organs of perception and their activities of perceiving their respective objects. Unless these two sets of organs are controlled, mind is not subdued.

In fact, mind itself, at the body-level, becomes the sense-organs and the mind projected away from the body is the great universe of sense-objects. When the mind playing through the body, identifies itself with its own projections, the objects, it is called perception; and when it comes in relationship with the world-of-objects, seeking satisfaction and entertainment it is called *action*. Disciplining the action and regulating the perception—in short, eliminating the ego-centric attitude in all our perceptions, in our relationships with the world-of-objects, is what advised here.

Ever-engaged in meditation: Controlling the actions and perceptions of the mind, is not possible so long as the mind is constantly flowing out through the sense-organs towards the sense-objects. Seeking sense gratifications, the mind is ever in a constant state of agitation. To quieten such a mind, it is necessary that we must give it some "point-of-contemplation" wherein as it engages itself more and more it shall discover a consummate happiness and get itself sufficiently disengaged from every thing else. Diverting the mind thus away from the world of sense-objects and maintaining the mind steadily flowing towards the contemplation of the Lord in an utter attitude of identification with it, is

called meditation. To be steadily in a state of such an all-consuming dedication unto a nobler and higher ideal is the method of cooling down the mind's boiling lust for sense-enjoyments.

“*Possessed of dispassion*”: Dispassion is *Vairagya*. It is not a mere self-denial of any object of enchantment; but it is a state obtaining when the mind rebounds upon itself from the objects as a result of its discovery that the objects contain no glow of happiness to provide to the individual. The essence of dispassion is not in our running away from the object. From a truly dispassionate man, the objects run away in their inexplicable despair.

The principle of supply and demand works also at the personality contacts with the world outside. Towards the drunkard bottles of wine march, but from a temperate man even the existing bottles in his cup-board march out. Dispassion is necessary and without it the mind will never grow, because growth of the mind will depend upon its capacity to outgrow itself from its present state. At any given moment a mind's growth is curtailed only by its own world of interests.

When the old interests in one die away and, ordered by the new intellectual visions, new interests rise up in his mind, the old world-of-objects around him suddenly retires, yielding its place to the new set of things that he has ordered around him, because of his newly developed mind. So long as I was a vicious man, sensuous friends and pleasure-seekers crowded my drawing-room; when I changed my view of life and took to serious social work and political activities, the group of idlers went away yielding their places to politicians and social workers. After a time when I grew

more and more in my mental make-up and so in my spiritual interests, even these politicians with their power-politics, and the social workers with their unspeakable jealousies and rivalries, retired yielding their seats to men of thought and spiritual benediction. This is a typical example of how when a mind grows, it leaves behind its old toys and enters totally into a greater field of nobler gains of life.

To sum up, a true seeker of the Higher Life must seek solitude, live in temperance, subdue his speech, body and mind and must live, in a spirit of dispassion, a true life of aspiration to heave himself towards the ideal.

These efforts can build up a temple of success only when the inner personality has a deep foundation upon certain enduring values of life. Those are enumerated in the following.

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।

विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥५३॥

53. *ahamkaram balam darpam
kamam krodham parigraham
vimucya nirmamah santo
brahmabhuvaya kalpate*

अहंकारं-Egoism, बलं-strength, दर्पं-arrogance
कामं-desire, क्रोधं - anger, परिग्रहम् - covetousness,
विमुच्य-having abandoned, निर्ममः - without mine-
ness, शान्तः-peaceful, ब्रह्मभूयाय - for becoming,
Brahman, कल्पते-(he) is fit.

53. Having abandoned egoism, strength, arrogance,
desire, anger, covetousness, free from the notion

of 'mine' and peaceful, he is fit for becoming *Brahman*.

If the above stanza indicated things that are to be acquired and brought about, in the relatively outer surfaces of the meditator's personality, here in this stanza is a list of things which are to be renounced from the inner core of the meditator's individuality.

The list so enumerated in the stanza is not in fact so many different items, but they are all different manifestations of one and the same wrong notion, namely the "I-act-mentality" (*Ahankara*). When this "sense-of-agency" develops, ego-centric vanities intensify within our bosom, and they manifest as "power" (*Bala*)—the "power" to strive and struggle, sweat and strain, to fulfil passions and desires. A powerful ego will, with each success in the sensuous world, gather to itself more and more "pride", or "arrogance" (*Darpam*).

To an individual personality, working under the influence of both "power" and "arrogance", "lust and anger" (*Kama and Krodha*) are natural, and, thereafter, he becomes a mad machine of restlessness within and of disturbances around in the society—ever anxiously bearing himself down upon the society in order that he may by any means acquire, possess and aggrandize objects of his fancy, the "wealth" (*Parigaha*).

The above listed six items are nothing but manifestations of the "sense-of-agency"—the 'I-act-mentality' (*Ahamkar*). Krishna requires of a meditator to forsake these and thus to immediately become egoless (*Nirmama*) and peaceful (*Shanta*). This is not the peace of grave nor the quite of the desert; this is the peace that arises out of the fullness of wisdom,

ont of our absolute satisfaction experienced in the Realm of perfection.

All restlessness is caused by the ego and its onward rush towards the finite objects, seeking among the ephemeral a satisfaction and joy that is permanent and enduring. When these sense-of-agency and the endless seeking of sense gratifications have been renounced, thereafter, the *sadhaka* experiences a relative quiet within his bosom. One who is turned thus, through understanding and discipline, is the one who can discover in oneself the required balance and equipoise to rocket up one's total personality into the higher climbs of "conscious unfoldment". The stanza does not say that such an individual has reached Perfection, but it definitely says, regarding such a seeker, that "*he is fit for becoming Brahman*". The above is but a preliminary preparation for the final realization.

What then is the next stage of development? Geeta explains :

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न कांक्षति ।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥५४॥

54. *brahmabhutoh prasannatma
na sokati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu
madbhaktim labhate param*

ब्रह्मभूतः - Brahman-become, प्रसन्नात्मा - serene-minded, न-not, शोचति-(he) grieves, न-not, कांक्षति-desires, समः - the same, सर्वेषु-all, भूतेषु-to beings, मद्भक्तिं-devotion unto Me, लभते - obtains, पराम्-supreme.

54. Becoming Brahman, serene in the Self, he neither grieves nor desires ; the same to all beings, he obtains a supreme devotion towards Me.

After liquidating the ego and its manifestations—enumerated in the above stanza as power, pride, lust, passion and sense of possession,—the seeker comes to experience a relatively greater peace within, as he is thereby released from all the confusions generally created by the physiological maladjustments and intellectual false evaluations of life. This newly discovered inner tranquillity, no doubt, artificially propped up for the time being by severe self-discipline, should be positively reinforced by definite efforts and constant vigilance.

With consistent self-effort the relative peace in the mind is to be for a longer period of time maintained and all the time zealously guarded. For, joys and sorrows will be constantly reaching our bosom from the outer world ; we are helpless at them. For even when the “sense-of-agency” has been renounced, the other aspect of the ego “I-enjoy-mentality” (*Bhokti itwa Bhavana*) will assert itself and poison the meditator. A worm cut into two pieces becomes two separate independent living worms ere long. So too, if the one aspect of ego, “I-act-mentality” is conquered, we must equally attend to the destruction of the other aspect of the ego, “I-enjoy-mentality” ; or else the surviving part within a very short time will revive and we shall discover a healthier ego, potentially more powerful and dangerous, readily rising out of the seemingly dead individuality*.

* This is the secret psychology behind such Sadhaks or monks, as after an initial period of renunciation and divine

One who has read well, reflected and understood the theme of the Absolute Reality as discussed in the Scriptures is indicated here by the term "*Brahma Bhutah*". This should not be construed as "one who has become Brahman". It only means "one who has convinced oneself of the existence and nature of the Reality as discussed in the Scriptures". Once this spiritual Truth is understood, the student necessarily becomes less agitated, because, all disturbances enter our life owing to our identification with equipments-of-experiences only. To the extent an intellect realizes the existence of the diviner aspect in it, it automatically withdraws its all-out clinging to the matter realm and to that extent it is not disturbed by the objects of perception, feeling and thought. Thus he gains a tranquillity (*Prasannatma*).

A seeker who has gained the knowledge of Brahman through *study* and made it his own through *reflection*, gains the tranquillity of composure as a result of his understanding, and the consequent partial liquidation of his ego-sense. Thereby he discovers in himself the courage to stand apart both from grief and desire. He grieves not (*Na Sochati*) because he feels no incompleteness in himself, as he used to feel in the earlier days of his arrogant ego. Since there is no sense of imperfection, his intellect no more spins new and novel plans for satisfactions and temporary gratifications, which are called desires. Naturally, one who grieves not in life he desires not (*Na Kankshati*) for the possession of anything to make complete his happiness.

seeking, suddenly leave their life of self-control or sacred robes and live a sensuous life. "I-enjoy-mentality" of the ego has not been fully transcended by them during "Sadhana".

A tranquil seeker—who in his understanding comes to desire nothing and has developed an independent source of happiness, which is free from the presence or the absence of any external environment—lives in the world, with a totally new set of values of life, in which, according to him, there is nothing but the constant experience of the Divine presence. Naturally, he develops an equanimity of vision*.

“ This type of an individual attains supreme devotion unto Me ”. Earlier an entire chapter was devoted to the discussion on devotion† wherein we had found that, according to the scripture, devotion is measured by our sense of identification with the higher ideal. In order to identify with the Infinite Truth, the seeker must have a definite amount of detachment from his usual channels of dissipation, both in the world outside and ther realms within.

The previous stanza indicated the methods of detachment and it was said that one who has accomplished them in the inner composition of oneself is the only one who is capable of striving for and succeeding in a true identification with the play of the Infinite in and through the finite. The expansiveness of vision, the catholicity of love and the release from sense preoccupation—all these are necessary in order to produce in the seeker the supreme love for the Lord. There is yet another stage in one’s pilgrimage to Truth.

What exactly is then the next stage?

* Ibid, Vol. I, Chapter V, Stan7as 18, 19 and 20.

† Chapter XII.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥५५॥

55. *bhaktya mam abhijanati*
vavan yas ca smi tattvatah
tato mam tattvata jnatva
visate tadanantarem

भक्त्या-By devotion, मां-Me, अभिजानाति-(he) knows, यावान्-what, यः- who, च-and, अस्मि-(I) am, तत्त्वतः -in essence, ततः- then, मां-Me, तत्त्वतः - in essence, ज्ञात्वा-having known, विशते-(he) enters, तत्-that, अनन्तरम्-afterwards.

55. By devotion he knows Me in essence, what and who I am ; then, having known Me in My Essence, he forthwith enters into the Supreme.

By devotion he comes to know Me : Devotion as we have explained is love for the Supreme. Love is measured by the amount of identification the lover maintains with the beloved. In short, when an ego-centric individuality, having gained all the above adjustments, seeks and discovers more and more its identity with the Self, it comes to experience the nature of the Self more and more deeply. That seeker comes to understand “ *What and who I am* ”.

In the entire Geeta the first person singular, is used by the Lord to indicate the Supreme Goal. It is not Lord Krishna, as an individual person that is indicated in the terms ‘ I ’ and ‘ Me ’ as used in these discourses. Remember this is Lord’s own Song, sung to revive his devotees, and the pronouns used here represent the Paramathman.

To know the Self means to know both its nature and identity. These are the topics in all scriptures. But the scriptural study gives us only an intellectual comprehension of Truth and not in reality, in essence, (*Tattwatah*) a spiritual apprehension of Truth as a lived experience.

Then having known Me in Essence : When this experience comes through slow and steady unfoldment of the light of Consciousness, through the dropping of curtains of ignorance created by our identifications with the body, we come to apprehend intoto the Infinite. The individuality and the panting sense of ego end, and “*he thereafter enters Me*”.

The entry mentioned here is not like a man entering a house, wherein the house is separate from him, and he is entering the house where he is not at the moment. There is no ego to enter into the plane of God-consciousness. The term ‘entry’ is used here exactly in the same fashion as we say “the dreamer then entered the waking state”. The dreamer cannot retain his own individuality when he enters the waking-world, but therein he becomes himself the “waker”. Similarly, when the ego enters the God-consciousness the individuality cannot retain itself in It. The misconception that it was an individual ends and it rediscovers, becomes, or awakens to the infinite Brahmanhood—the State of Krishna Consciousness.

Devotion for the Lord is never complete without service to the living world of creatures :

सर्वकर्मण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्रूपाश्रयः ।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥५६॥

56. *sarvakarmāṇy api sāda
kurvano madvyapasrayah
matprasadaḥ avapnoti
sasvatam padam avyayam*

सर्वकर्मणि- all actions, अपि-also, सदा-always,
कुर्वन् - doing, मद्व्यपाश्रयः - taking refuge in Me,
मत्प्रसादात्-by my grace, अवाप्नोति-obtains, शाश्वतम्-
the eternal, पदम् - state or abode, अव्ययम् - indes-
tructible.

56. Doing all actions, always taking refuge in Me, by
My grace he obtains the Eternal Indestructible
State or Abode.

The philosophy of the Geeta is extremely dynamic. The Song of the Lord is an innocent-looking magazine of power which can be detonated by correct understanding. The warmth of living makes it explode, blasting the crust of ignorance that has grown around the nobler personality and its diviner possibilities in the student.

Devotion to the Lord (*Bhakti*) in the Geeta is not a mere passive surrender unto the ideal, nor a mere physical ritualism. Lord Krishna insists not only on our identification with the higher through an intelligent process of detachment from both the sense of “agency” and “enjoyment”, but also, on the understanding and the inner experience being brought out positively in all our contacts with the world outside and in all our relationships.

Religion to Lord Krishna is not fulfilled by a mere withdrawal from the outer world of sense-objects, but there is also a definite come back into the world, bringing

into it the fragrance of peace and joy of the yonder, to brighten and beautify the drab inert objects that constitute the world. Therefore, after describing one who can be considered as the highest devotee, in this stanza Krishna adds another condition to be fulfilled by all the seekers.

The Geetacharya never wants to receive any devotee at His gate, nor will he give an audience to anyone, unless he carried the passport of self-less service in society—*“performing continuously all actions, always taking refuge in Me”*.

In order to serve without the “sense-of-agency” the practical method is *“take refuge in Me”*. Such a seeker, who is constantly working thus in fulfilling his obligatory duties to the society and towards himself has *“My grace” (Matparasad)*.

The Supreme has no existence apart from His Grace ; He is His grace, His grace is He. The grace of the Self, therefore means, more and more the play of the divine Consciousness in and through the personality layers in the individual. In an individual to the extent his mind and intellect are available in their discipline to be ruled over by the spiritual truth to that extent he is under the blessings of His Grace.*

“He attains to the Eternal Immutable State” : When thus working in the world without the sense of agency and enjoyment the existing *vasanas* become exhausted and the

* Prasad—Refer Conversations With Death (*Kathopanishad*), wherein we had the same discussion when Grace was discussed as the inner purity (*Dhatu-Prasad*).

ego-centre gets eliminated. Awakening thus from the delusory projections of the ego, the individual attains the State of Pure Consciousness, and comes to live thereafter the Eternal Immortal State—the Kṛisna-State of Perfection.

In the preceding three stanzas the Paths of Knowledge, Devotion and Action are indicated and in all of them the same goal of realising the seeker's oneness with the Supreme has been indicated.* Integral sadhana is the core of the Geeta technique. To synthesize the methods of Devotion, Work and Knowledge, is at once discipline of the body, mind and intellect. For all disciplines pursued from the body level in order to control the mind and turn it towards the ideal is called the *Karma Yoga*; all methods of channelising emotions in order to discipline the mind to contemplate upon the Higher is called the *Bhakti Yoga*; and all study and reflection, detachment and meditation, practised at the intellectual level whereby, again, the mind is lifted to the realm of silent experience of its own Infinitude is called *Gnana Yoga*. To practise all the three during one's life is to discipline all the three layers. Thus the philosophy of total spiritual transformation of the perceiver, the feeler and the thinker all at once, is the secret contribution that Geeta has to make to the timeless tradition of the Hindu culture as available for us in the Upanishads.

Therefore:

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥५७॥

* Madbhaktim Labhate Param—Stanza 52:; Maam—Visate tadadantaram—stanza 55; Apnoti Saswatam Padam Avyayam—stanza 56.

57. *cetasa sarvakarmani
mayi samnyasya matparah
buddhiyogam upasritya
maccittah satatam bhava*

चेतसा - Mentally, सर्वकर्मणि - all actions, मयि - in Me, संन्यस्य - resigning, मत्परः - having Me as the highest goal, बुद्धियोगम् - the Yoga of discrimination, उपाश्रित्य - resorting to, मच्चित्तः - with the mind fixed on Me, सततम् - always, भव - be.

57. Mentally renouncing all actions in Me, having Me as the highest goal, resorting to the Yoga of discrimination, (please) ever fix your mind in Me.

“*Resigning mentally all deeds to me*”: Both the ego and the ego-centric anxieties for enjoying, are to be renounced at the altars of the Lord, and thus to act in the world is the path, through which a man of action reaches the greater cultural climes. This idea of surrender has been discussed earlier very exhaustively.* This spirit of surrender can come only when the student has infinite courage, to maintain a steady aspiration for “*having Me as the Highest Goal*”. Mind needs a positive hold upon something, before it can be persuaded to leave its present prop.

“*Resorting to the Buddhi-Yoga*” : Intellect’s function is mainly discrimination. To discriminate the false from the true, and fixing ourselves on the path of seeking the true

* Refer commentaries on the most crucial stanza in Chapter III—Stanza 30.

is called the *Buddhi Yoga*. Controlling life and regulating its movements through discrimination is *Karma Yoga*. And thus the term ‘*Buddhi Yoga*’ is an original coining met with only in the Geeta to indicate the Path of Selfless Action. It was used in the very early portions of the Geeta,† and there it was very exhaustively explained.

“(Please) ever fix your mind on Me”: One who has fixed the Krishna-*Tattwa* as the goal of his life; one who surrenders himself mentally at all times at this altar and serves all His creatures; one who ever discriminates and avoids all undivine thoughts and ego-centric self-assertions—such a one alone can, naturally, come to fix his thoughts constantly upon the Lord.

It is the eternal law of the mental life that “as we think so we become.” A devotee who has thus come to live in all his activities in dedication to his goal, the Krishna Consciousness, he must necessarily come to live as Krishna and experience the Eternal Immutable State of the Self.

Suppose one refuses to follow this seemingly arduous path, what would be his condition?—Listen :

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।

अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारात्त श्रोष्यसि विन्ङ्क्ष्यसि ॥५८॥

58. *maccittah sarvadurgani*
matprasadat tarisyasi
atha cet tvam ahamkaran
na srosyasi vinanksyasi

† Chapter II—Stanza 39 wherein we have exhaustively described the *Buddhi Yoga*.

मच्चित्तः - Fixing your mind on Me, **सर्वदुर्गाणि**-all obstacles, **मत्प्रसादात्**-by my grace, **तरिष्यसि** - (you) shall overcome, **अथ**-now, **चेत्**-if, **त्वम्**-you, **अहंकारान्**-from egoism, **न**-not, **श्रेष्यसि** - you will hear, **विनश्यसि**-(you) shall perish.

58. Fixing your mind on Me, you shall by My grace, overcome all obstacles ; but if, from egoism, you will not hear Me, you shall perish.

The vigorous personality of Arjuna, though at the beginning of the Geeta was under a hysterical coma, has by now revived to feel the native thirst of the Aryan-heart to be practical at all moments. He wants to acquire the perfections indicated in Krishna's Discourses. He is not one who is satisfied with a mere bundle of ideal dreams or fascinating discussions on some possibilities and probabilities. He wants a practical method to attain the Infinite and Krishna gives him the necessary practical tips.

Lord Krishna in essence says "by your thoughts, renounce all your activities on Me." All activities in the world are only expressions of the Divine Consciousness flashing Its brilliance through the body ; be conscious of the Lord in all activities, without Whom no action is ever possible. Keep Him as your Goal. Make your intellect constantly aware of this "Lord of all Actions". Gradually the mind and body will begin to work under the command of such an inspired intellect."

We make mistakes in life only when our intellect does not function properly in coming to its correct judgments. Often our intellect becomes itself a victim of the impulses

and instincts of our lower nature, the mind. To keep the intellect consciously wakeful, one must always remember the Presence within and perceive without, the Play of the Lord to whom alone all actions belong. A devotee likens an ambassador of a country who constantly remembers that he is a representative of his country, in thought speech action, at all times of his sojourn in the capital to which he has been appointed. So long as we are in the body, mind and intellect we have to remember constantly that we are but His "appointed" agents, through whom the Infinite plays.

How will this constant remembrance of the Lord help? This is being now answered in the stanza under discussion. Krishna says : "*He who has completely fixed all his thoughts on Me, he will cross over all difficulties by My Grace*". Most of our obstacles in life are imaginary—created by false fears and deceitful anxieties of our own confused mind. The "grace" referred to here means "the result accrued in our mental nature when our mind is properly tuned up to and peacefully settled in the Infinite as represented in the Lord of our heart. It does not mean any special consideration shown by the all-loving Lord, to some rare persons, out of His own choice. The Grace of the All-Pervading is present everywhere, because Grace is His Form. Just as the ever present sunlight of a bright day, cannot illumine my room so long as the windows are closed, so too, the harmony and joy of life, which is of the Infinite, cannot penetrate into our life, so long as the windows of discrimination in us are tightly shut. To the extent the windows of my room are open, to that extent the room is flooded by the immense light ; to the extent a seeker pursues his *sadhana* and brings about the above-mentioned adjustments, to that extent the Grace of the Self floods his within.

By constantly remembering the Lord and his Glories, cultivate a nobler and higher goal of life. By this process we conserve our personality-energy which, as it is, gets unfortunately dissipated in sense indulgences, in the hellish streaking storms of lust, in the sweeping floods of passion, and in the flowing lava of desires. When these unintelligent and now unnoticed dissipations are controlled, the human mind rediscovers in itself a new Vitality and strength added into its greater potentialities.

In the second line of the stanza the Lord warns against all those who in their utter ignorance, disobey this Law of Life. Natural laws are irrevocable ; they have no eyes, nor ears. They just continue in their own rhythm and that man is happy who discovers the law and obeys it implicitly*

"But if from egoism you will not hear Me, you shall perish": This is not a divine threat hurled down upon mankind by a tyrannical Power, to frighten the human beings into obedience. This is not comparable with the threat of the hell held up by other religions. This is a mere statement of fact : even if it be Newton himself, if he falls down from the balcony of his home, gravitational force will indeed act upon him also. There is a vast inevitability in nature's laws. Man is free to choose freedom or bondage. The path to

* This statement is often misunderstood by the hasty generation as the tyrannical laws of religion. A little thought will clear this misunderstanding. If scientific discoveries in the world have brought the natural force under man's service, it is only because Science has discovered the laws that govern them, and the generation has condescended to follow implicitly these laws.

freedom is described above and in this open and sincere statement the Lord is only showing His anxiety not to mince matters, but to be callously naked in His expressions.

Guidance towards this true “way-of-life” always comes to us from the depths of our nature expressed in the language of “the soft small voice of the within”. But man’s ego and ego-centric desires force him to disobey the ringing voice of the Lord, and such a one pursues a life of base vulgarity seeking sense-gratification, ultimately bringing himself down to be raped by his own uncontrolled emotions and unchastened ideas. Hence the warning: “You shall perish”.

To weave the idea into the very warp and woof Arjuna’s life, the Lord says :

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।

मिथ्यैषव्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥५९॥

59. *yad ahamkaram asritya
na yotsya iti manyase
mithyai sa vyavasayas te
prakrtis tvam niyoksyati*

यत्-If, अहंकारं-egoism, आश्रित्य-having taken refuge in, न - not, योत्स्य - (I) will fight, इति - thus, मन्यसे-(you) think, मिथ्या - vain, एषः - this, व्यवसायः - resolve, ते - your, प्रकृतिः - nature, त्वां - you, नियोक्ष्यति - will compel.

59. If filled with egoism, you think, “I will not fight”, vain is this, your resolve, (for) nature will compel you.

General statements of truth have a knack of becoming too volatile to get retained in one's understanding permanently. But the general statements of life's principles when woven into the texture of one's own experiences, remain as one's own earned "knowledge", gained from the discourses, and they become a permanent *wisdom*. Accordingly, Krishna is trying to bring the philosophical contents of his discourse into the very substance of Arjuna's own immediate problem.

Due to a sense of self-importance and self-conceit Arjuna thinks, "*I will not fight*"; he thinks so in vain. Consequence must follow as readily and regularly as the day follows the night. The temperament of Arjuna must seek its expression, and being a Kshatriya of passionate nature, his *Rajoguna* will assert itself: "*nature will compel you*". One who has eaten salt must feel terribly thirsty ere long. The false arguments raised by Arjuna for not fighting the battle are all compromises made by his ego with the situation.

Even if he follows his temporary attitude of escapism and desists from fighting, it is a law of nature that his mental temperament should assert itself at a later period, when, alas!, he may not have the field to express himself and exhaust his *vasanas*.

Also because of the following reason: "You must fight":

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।

कर्तुर्नेच्छसियन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपितत् ॥६०॥

60. *svabhavajena kaunteya
nibaddhah svena karmana
kartum ne cchasi yan mohat
karisyasy avaso pi tat*

स्वभावजेन - Born of (your) own nature, कौन्तेय -
 O Kaunteya, निबद्धः - bound, स्वेन - (your) own,
 कर्मणा - by action, कर्तुम् - to do, न - not, इच्छसि-(you)
 wish, यत् - that, मोहात् - through delusion, करिष्यसि -
 (you) shall do, अवशः -helpless, अपि - also, तत् -that.

60. O son of Kunti, bound by your own *Karma*
 (action), born of your own nature, that which,
 through delusion you wish not to do, even that
 you shall do helplessly.

Continuing the Lord in effect says: “I am asking you
 to fight, not because I have no personal sympathies with
 you, but because that is the only course left open for you.
 You have no other choice Though you now insist that
 you “*will not fight*”, it is merely an illusion. You will
 have to fight, because your nature will assert itself”.

The actions we do are propelled by our own *vasanas*
 and they shackle our personality. Arjuna is essentially of
 the *Rajoguna*-type and therefore he must fight. The
 Pandava Prince cannot, all of a sudden, pose to have the
 beauties of the *Sattwic* nature of heart, and retire to a
 solitary place to live a serene life of steady contemplation,
 and come to experience the consequent self-unfoldment.

Because of wrong thinking and miscalculations, Arjuna
 feels that he does not like war, and, therefore he is not
 ready to face it. But inspite of his determination he will be
 compelled to fight by his own nature ordered by the existing
vasanas in him now. This is the irrevocable law of life.

He who has no control over his mind becomes a victim
 of circumstances. He gets thrown up and down irresistibly

by the whim and fancy of things around him. But he who gains this inner mastery over the mind and stands rooted and unshaken by the circumstances is the one who will revel (*Rati*) in the Pure Light (*Bha*) of wisdom :* and the country that recognises this culture has acquired its immortal name ' *Bharata* '.

The eighteenth Chapter in the Geeta can be considered as enunciating a philosophy to which the earlier seventeen chapters are but so many brilliant arguments. The greater the control of the mind administered by the intellect the nobler is that man; and the texture and nature of the great man will depend upon the nature of the values that his intellect has learnt to acquire and respect in life.

In the previous two or three stanzas we are told by Krishna " *Remember Me constantly* ". What does this mean? How should we remember? Does it mean meditating upon the Lord? What should be our relationship with Him? Are we to remember Him as an historical event, or remember Him as intimately connected with us as a ' Presence ' expressing Itself at all times in and through us?

All these questions are apt to rise up in any serious Student. And they are answered in the following :

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥६१॥

61. *isvarah sarvabhutanam
hrddese rjuna tisthati
bhramayan sarvabhutani
yantrarudhani mayaya*

* And hence the name of India is ' BHA-RATA '.

ईश्वरः - The Lord, सर्वभूतानां - of all beings, हृद्देशे
- in the hearts, अर्जुन - O Arjuna, तिष्ठति - dwells,
भ्रामयन् - causing to revolve, सर्वभूतानि - all beings,
यन्त्रारूढानि - mounted on a machine, मायया - by
illusion.

61. The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O
Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power,
revolve as if mounted on a machine.

The advice given by the Lord is clear and beyond all
shades of doubt. “Remember the Lord,” says the Geeta-
charya “as the one who organises, controls and directs all
things in the world and without Whose command nothing ever
happens. In His presence alone everything can happen—
therefore remember Him as *Iswara*.” The steam functioning
in the piston of the engine is the “lord” of the engine and
without it the piston cannot function. It is the steam which
provides the locomotion and renders the train dynamic.

Do not remember the Lord as merely a personified
Power as the Shiva in Kailas, as the Vishnu in Vaikuntha,
as the Father in Heaven, etc. But recognize Him as one who
dwells in the heart of everyone. Just as the address of a person
is given, in order that the seeker of that person may locate the
individual in a busy town, so also in order to seek, discover
and identify with the Lord, His “Local address” is being
provided here by Bhagawan Krishna.

While saying that “*the Lord dwells in the heart of all
living beings*,” it is not meant the physical heart. In
philosophy the word “heart” is more figurative than literal.
It is something like our saying that this individual has a

“large heart”, or a “good heart”. Here we only mean that the individual in question is a man of love and all humane qualities.

“*Residing thus in the heart*”—meaning, in the mental bosom of one who has cultivated the divine qualities of a cultured human being such as love, kindness, patience, cheer, affection, tenderness, forgiveness, charity, etc.—the Lord lends His Power for all the living creatures to act on. He energizes everyone. Everything revolves around Him—like the unseen hand that manipulates the dolls in the Marionett play. The puppets have no existence, no vitality, no emotions of their own; they are mere expressions of the will and the intention of the unseen hand behind them.

It is not the matter in us that moves or becomes conscious of the world of transactions; or else the cucumber and the pumpkin, the corn and the tomato with which our bodies are made will also have either locomotion or consciousness. The same vegetables when they are consumed as food and when they are digested and assimilated to become parts of our physical body, the matter in contact with the Life Principle in us becomes vibrant and dynamic, capable of perceiving, feeling and thinking. The Spark of Life presiding over the body the Eternal Pure Consciousness is that which, as it were, vitalises the inert matter. Pure Consciousness in itself does not act; but in Its presence the matter envelopments get vitalised and act.

The Atman, conditioned by the body, mind and intellect, expresses dynamism and action, and creates what we recognise as the manifested individuality in each. “The Supreme functioning through the total cause of all action” is called Iswara.* The Life functioning in each one of us

* “Samashti-Kaarna-Sareera-Abhimani Iswarah”.

is the master, the controller, the director and the Lord of one's individual activities.

The essential Life in all of us is one and the same ; therefore, the Total Life functions through and manifests as the entire universe, energising all existing equipments. Thus, expressing through all activities, is the Lord of the Universe, Iswara. With this understanding if you read the stanza again, you will understand the metaphor employed herein.

If there be thus a Lord within, meaning a Power that rules over and guides all my activities, what are my responsibilities and duties towards him ?

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥६२॥

62. *tam eva saranam gaccha
sarvabhavena bharata
tatprasadat param santim
sthanam prapsyasi sasvatam*

तम् - To Him, एव - even, शरणं गच्छ - take refuge, सर्वभावेन - with all thy being, भारत - O Bharata, तत्प्रसादात् - by His grace, परां -supreme, शान्तिं - peace, स्थानं - the abode, प्राप्स्यसि - (you) shall obtain, शाश्वतं - eternal.

62. Fly unto Him for refuge with all your being, O Bharata ; by His grace you shall obtain Supreme Peace (and) the Eternal Abode.

Such an elaborate description has been given of the spiritual Presence, which vitalises the world of matter around

man, only to ultimately bring about an evolutionary self-development in the student. The very core of Geeta philosophy is the theme that is indicated in the opening stanza in the '*Isavasya Upanishad*'. "The infinite Truth pervades everything in the world, and therefore, renouncing all the multiplicity enjoy the Infinitude, and covet not anybody's wealth*".

Recognition of the body, and our identifications with it creates a false sense of individuality and it is this ego that suffers and sighs.

The one commandment that has been repeated all through the Divine Song with an insistence that almost amounts to an exasperation to the student is "Renounce the ego and act." Ego is the cause for all our sense of imperfections and sorrows. To the extent we liquidate this sense of separateness and individuality, to that extent we climb into an experience of greater perfection and joy within ourselves.

Krishna has been advising surrender of the ego unto the Lord by developing a devoted attitude of dedication. Arjuna, like a true intelligent sceptic, doubts, "to which Lord should I renounce all my actions?—Dedicate all my activities at which altar?" Krishna had defined the Infinite Lord in the previous stanza, and now, here He advises Arjuna to surrender his ego unto HIM. "*Fly unto Him for refuge with all your will*".

* Refer "Discourses an *Isavasyopanishad*" by Swami Chinmayananda. While reading the commentary upon this *mantra* in the *Upanishad*, please see that you glance through the commentaries upon the "Peace invocation" of the same *Upanishad* which comes earlier to the *mantra*.

Ours is an age of scepticism. Arjuna of the Geeta was, as though, a typical representative of our own age in this respect. A sceptic is one who questions the existing belief ; he wants to be intellectually convinced of the logical grounds upon which the existing beliefs stand †.

Earlier, Krishna had explained to Arjuna what is indicated by the term *Iswara*. Now the call of the Geeta to Arjuna here is to surrender himself unto the Lord. Geeta requires all of us to live and act with our hearts resting in self-dedicated surrender to the Consciousness, the harmonious oneness of Life that pulsates everywhere through all equipments. In short, we are told to identify ourselves with the Spirit rather than the vehicles of Its expression. He who has thus surrendered totally (*Sarwabhavena*) gains an intellect fully awakened, and thereafter, external circumstances cannot toss and crush his individuality.

The body and mind of such an individual who has learnt to keep ever the refreshing memory of the present cannot make any foolish demands. And when one brings such a brilliant intellect in to the affairs of life, all his problems wither away, to carpet his path to strive progressively still ahead.

† As a contrast to the sceptic, the atheist is one so dull and under-developed in his evolution, that the poor man is trying to live a mere animal life even though he is in the physical form of a man. His goal in life is mere satisfaction and momentary joys, gained while he gratifies and soothes his nerve tips. He has not got yet an awakened heart or head to feel the majesty and glory of life, or to think and question the existence of faith and its basis.

To the extent we identify with him to that extent His light and power comes to be ours which is called His grace (*Prasad*). Ere long as a result of this accumulated “grace” brought within, through the integration of the personality and a constant surrender of the ego, the individual shall obtain “*the Supreme peace, the eternal resting place*”.

With one's all being (*Sarvabhavana*) : This surrender unto the Lord should not be a temporary self-deception. We must grow into a consciousness of the presence of the divine in all the planes of our existence. To illustrate such an all-out devotion, we have the examples of Radha, Hanuman, Prahlada and others. Without bringing all the levels of our being and all the facets of our personality into our love for Him, we cannot drown our finite ego-sense into the joyous lap of the Infinite Lord. Thus, a true devotee must change the entire orientation of his being, and must surrender himself as a willing vehicle for His expressions. Then and then alone, all the delusions end and the mortal gains the experience and lives the State of Immortality—the Godhood.

In conclusion Krishna adds :

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥६३॥

63. *iti te jnanam akhyatam*
guhyad guhyataram maya
vimrasyai tad asesena
yathe cchasi tatha kuru

इति - Thus, ते - to you, ज्ञानं - wisdom, आख्यातं - has been declared, गुह्यात् - than the secret, गुह्यतरं -

more secret, मया - by Me, विमृश्य - reflecting over,
एतत् - this, अशेषेण - fully, यथा - as, इच्छसि- (you)
choose, तथा - so, कुरु - act.

63. Thus has the Wisdom, more secret than all secrets,
been declared to you by Me: having reflected
over it fully, then you act as you choose to act.

This can be considered as the closing stanza of His
discourses on the battle field of Kurukshetra. The word
“thus” (*Iti*) is generally used in Sanskrit to indicate what
we mean now-a-days in the phrase “quotation closes”. The
Lord has ended His Discourses here.

The Geetacharya has by now declared the essential
features of the entire Hindu view and way-of-life. There is
nothing more for the teacher to add.

More secret than all secrets: (*Guhyat Guhyataram*) A
secret can maintain itself only so long as it is not known.
The moment we have come to know of a thing it is no longer
a secret at all. The spiritual truth and the right way-of-
living as discussed in the Geeta are termed as “*the secret of
all secrets*” in the sense that it is not easy for one to know
the Geeta way of dynamic life and the Geeta vision of Truth,
unless one is initiated into them. Even a subtle intellect,
very efficient in knowing the material world, both in its
arrangement of things and interactions among them, must
necessarily fail to feel the presence of this subtle, Eternal
and Infinte Self.

This is a term (*Guhyam*) that went into much misuse
and abuse in India in our recent past. The term was miscon-
strued to mean that the spiritual knowledge, which is the core

of our culture, is a great secret to be carefully preserved and jealously guarded against anybody else coming to learn it. This view of the orthodox has no sanction in the scriptures if we read them with the same large-heartedness of the *Rishis* who gave them to us. No doubt, there are persons who have not the intellectual vision, nor the mental steadiness, nor the physical discipline to understand correctly this great Truth in all its subtle implications, and, therefore, this is kept away from them lest they should come to harm themselves by falsely living a misunderstood philosophy.

“*Reflect over it all*”—Any amount of listening cannot make one gain in one’s wisdom. The knowledge gained through reading or listening must be assimilated and brought within the warp and woof of our understanding, then alone can knowledge become wisdom. Therefore, Arjuna is asked not to accept Krishna’s Song of Life as such, but he has been asked to independently think over all that the Lord had declared. To put the ideas between the mind and the intellect and to chew them properly is “reflection.” Each one will have to get his own individual confirmation from his own bosom.

“*Thereafter act as you please:*” Krishna ultimately leaves the decision to act, the will to live the higher life to Arjuna’s own sweet choice. Each one must reach the Lord by his own free choice. There is no compulsion, for free-spontaneity is an invaluable requisite for all new births. Ceaserian operation is dangerous very often both for the child and for the mother; proselytisation is always dangerous both for the Church as well as for the new convert. There is no compulsion in Hinduism. We can train the plant, trim it to beauty, serve it with fertilizing waters and keep it in the required sunlight, but we cannot force a bud to yield

its fragrance right now. Similarly, a human personality cannot be forced by compulsion to grow in its moral and ethical beauty or in its spiritual unfoldment.

In fact, an artist can thrive only in freedom and never under shackles. The Hindu has been called upon to think independently and come to his own conclusions. Certain directions are pointed out in order to make them contemplate but each must come to his own understanding. If it is forced down as a discipline on the people there is a chance that religion would become a physical discipline rather than an inner unfoldment. Hence Krishna suggests to Arjuna, "*Do as you choose to act*"—after fully reconsidering the way-of-life and the goal indicated by him so far in his Song Divine.

Man is ever free to reject or accept the Call Divine, but there is no question of a generation being *driven* into religion ; according to the Hindu way-of-thought, the aspirants of culture must be individually *drawn* towards the higher way-of-life. True spiritual masters will not, and should not, persuade their generation through violence, miracles, and false promises. A true prophet will not accept any false responsibility ; he will only constantly counsel his generation, but never will he compel.

Fanatic bigotry has caused untold human miseries. A thoughtless generation, under the false persuasions of the priest class, is often pushed forward to commit murders, in the name of holy wars ! This is possible only when the general mass of devotees are kept in utter ignorance, and are made to blindly believe, without any independent thinking, what the Prophets or the Teachers have said.

On the other hand, here you will find, the very symbolism of the Geeta scene, Krishna, the teacher, is a mere

charioteer ready to drive the chariot in any direction to which Arjuna, the master, shall command. Krishna bears no weapon, he has no war to wage. He has nothing to gain or to lose in the fields of Kurukshetra. Yet, it is His duty to bring to the notice of His “master” certain points of view, certain verities, which Arjuna seems to have not cared to recognize, or has overlooked, because of the peculiar mental condition in which he was then. Having placed all the facts and figures of life, principles and methods of living, Krishna rightly declares to Arjuna to make his independent decision after considering all these points. Spiritual teacher should never compel. And in India there had never been any form of indoctrination.

Devotion to the Lord is the secret of success in Karma Yoga. This is explained in the following :

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥६४॥

64. *sarvaguhyatamam bhuyah
srnu me paramam vacah
isto si me drdham iti
tota vaksyami te hitam*

सर्वगुह्यतमम्—The most secret of all, भूयः—again, शृणु—hear, मे—My, परमम्—supreme, वचः—word, इष्टः—beloved, असि—(you) are, मे—of Me, दृढम्—dearly, इति—thus, ततः—therefore, वक्ष्यामि—(I) will speak, ते—your, हितम्—what is good.

64. Hear again My supreme word, most secret of all ; because you are dearly beloved of Me, therefore, I will tell you what is good (for you).

When the Lord has concluded this entire discourse with the words “ *the wisdom has been declared to you by me ; now do as you please* ”. Arjuna, who has been all along devotedly and attentively listening to the philosophy expounded, seems to register an expression of confusion on his face. Arjuna wants to get some more instructions*. The Pandava Prince, perhaps, feels that he has not fully assimilated the deep and intimate philosophy of life as expounded by the Lord so long. Therefore Krishna continues : “ *Again I will repeat the profoundest wisdom ; please, Arjuna, listen again to this supreme Wisdom* ”.

The motive force behind every teacher coming out into the world to preach, to explain, to expound, is but his extreme love for mankind. Krishna is repeating here the salient factors of his philosophical goal and the means of realising it, to Arjuna, “ *because you are dearly beloved of me* ”, meaning “ *you are my firm friend* ”. For this reason, Krishna tries to recapture his scheme of right living and noble endeavour in a miniature snap.

Arjuna is by temperament a soldier ; and a soldier's intellect has no patience to benefit by a dialectical discourse. What he can best appreciate is only a cut and dry order shouted at him, and he has been trained by his vocation

* An identical situation we find in the closing pages of the *Kenopanishad*, where, when everything has been declared, the student requests the teacher “ *teach me the knowledge of Brahman* ”, whereupon the teacher declares that he has said all that he has to say. And yet, he adds on a few more *mantras* prescribing the discipline that is unavoidable for a beginner. Refer Swamiji's Discourses on *Kenopanishad*.

always to follow it implicitly. Reports and memoranda confuse the soldier; he is conditioned by his active nature and military training to obey implicitly precise orders shot at him in crisp words. Arjuna is expecting Krishna to recast the whole philosophy into a precise, definite, decisive commandment. Understanding this silent demand of the soldier's heart, Krishna promises here that He shall now declare (*Sarva-guhya-tamam*), the truth which is "the most secret of all".

What is it?

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥६५॥

65. *manmana bhava madbhakto*
madyaji mam namaskuru
mam evai syasi satyam te
pratijane priyo si me

मन्मना—With mind fixed on Me, भव-be, मद्भक्तः—devoted to Me, मद्याजी—sacrifice to Me, माम्—Me, नमस्कुरु—bow down, मां—to Me, एव—even, एष्यसि—(you) shall come, सत्यम्—truth, ते—to you, प्रतिजाने—(I) promise), प्रियः—dear, असि—(you) are, मे—of Me.

65. Fix your mind on Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; bow down to Me. You shall come even to Me alone; truly do I promise to you (for) you are dear to Me.

A successful philosopher working in the field of renaissance, in any age of utter decadence, cannot avoid repeating

again and again the fundamental points that constitute the framework of his philosophy because explanations have got a knack of veiling the main principles behind the mist of words. And yet, without elucidating explanations, the fundamental ideas cannot be hammered in. No nail can be driven home by soft persuasion ; but it is to be remorselessly banged in by a hammer. Ideas cannot penetrate a confused head unless they are forced in by the sledge hammer blows of repetition. This is the systematic method adopted in all *Sastras*. Krishna, therefore, repeats here the salient features of the philosophy of the Geeta for the benefit of his student.

Four conditions are laid down for a successful seeker, and to the one in whom they are present, an assurance of realisation, "*you shall reach Me*", is given here. When a philosophy is summarised and enumerated in a few points, it has got a false look of utter simplicity, and a student is apt to take it lightly and ignore it intoto. In order to avoid such a mistake, the teacher invariably endorses his statement that it is indeed all Truth, "*I promise you truly*".

To add a punch to this personal endorsement, Krishna guarantees the motive behind his discourses : "*You are dear to me*". Love is a correct motive-force behind all spiritual teachings. Unless a teacher has got an infinite love for the taught there is no inspired joy in teaching ; a professional teacher is at best only a wage earner. He can neither inspire the student nor, while teaching, come to experience within himself the joyous ecstasy of satisfaction and fulfilment, which are the true rewards of teaching.

A substantial part of the philosophy and the path declared herein had already been taught in an earlier chap-

ter†. And the same thing is repeated here with the endorsement that what He is declaring is no pleasant compromise but the total unadulterated truth.

With the mind fixed on Me:—Meaning, “ever remembering Me”, “ever devotedly identifying with Me”, through the processes of dedicating all your activities unto Me, in an attitude of reverence, unto the All-pervading Life, if you work in the service of the world, the promise is that you will reach the Supreme Goal.

In all other religions the Goal is other than the Prophet; only in the Geeta the Supreme Himself is advising and, therefore, He has to express “*You will reach Me.*”

Looking up to Vasudeva alone as your aim, means and end, “you shall reach Me”. Knowing that the Lord’s declarations are true, and being convinced that liberation is a necessary result of devotion for the Lord, one should look up to the Lord as the highest and the sole refuge.

The maladjusted ego in us has, by its own false concepts and imaginations, wound us all up into a cocoon of confusions and has tied us down with self-made shackles. Now it is up to us to renounce these chains that throttle us and gain our freedom from ourselves. The All-perfect, Supreme has been as though shackled by our mind and intellect, and now the same mind and intellect must be utilized to unwind the binding chords. If we *lock* ourselves up in a room, it is left to us only to unlock its doors and walk out into free-

† Read the Discourses on stanza 34 in Chapter IX (Volume II.)

dom. *Vasanas* are created by our ego-centric activities (*Sakama Karma*), by self-less work (*Nishkama Karma*) alone can these *vasanas* be ended. Therefore, Krishna advises us to act on, “with mind fixed on Me. Devotedly work for Me. Dedicate all your activities as a sacrifice, as an offering unto Me.”

An attitude of reverence to the Supreme is necessary in order to regain into the texture of our own life, the qualities of the Supreme. Like water, knowledge also flows only from a higher to a lower level. Therefore, our minds must be in an attitude of surrender to Him in utter reverence and devotion.

When you you work in the world in such an attitude, Krishna says, “*you shall reach the Supreme*”.

According to Shankara : “having taught in conclusion that the Supreme secret of the *Karma Yoga* is in regarding Lord as the sole refuge, *Krishna now proceeds to speak of the Infinite Knowledge, the fruit of Karma Yoga, as taught in the essential portions of all the Upanishads*”:

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥६६॥

66. *sarvadarman partiyajya*
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tva sarvapapebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah

सर्वधर्मान्-All Dharmas, परित्यज्य-having abandoned, माम्-to Me, एकम्-alone, शरणम्-refuge, ब्रज-

take, अहम्-I, त्वाम्-thee, सर्वपापेभ्यः - from all sins, मोक्षयिष्यामि-will liberate, मा-not, शुचः - grieve.

66. Abandoning all Dharmas, take refuge in Me alone ;
I will liberate thee from all sins : grieve not.

This is the noblest of the stanzas in the Divine Song and this is yet the most controversial. Translators, reviewers, critics and commentators have invested all their originality while at this stanza, and the various philosophers, each maintaining his own point of view, had ploughed the words of this stanza to plant their ideas in the ample bosom of this great verse of brilliant imports. To Shri Ramanuja this is the final verse (*Charma Sloka*) of the whole Geeta.

At least a few, if not many, of the translators have spoiled the beauty of the original, especially when their attempts were to render this verse into English. This is mainly because there is no equivalent term in any language of the world, which can safely bear the total burden of the full import of the term “*Dharma*”, as it is used in the Hindu *Sastras*. The term mystifies any student of our religious text books.

Most often used, and yet in no two places with identical shade of suggestion, *Dharma* has become the very pith of the Hindu culture. This explains why the religion of India, was called by the people who lived in the land and enjoyed its spiritual wealth, as the ‘*Sanathana Dharma*’.

On our interpretation of the term *Dharma* will depend our understanding of the stanza. *Dharma* as used in our scriptures is, to put it directly and precisely, “*the law of being*”. That because of which a *thing* continues itself to

be the *thing*, without which the *thing* cannot continue to be the *thing*, is the *Dharma* of the *thing*. Heat, because of which fire maintains itself as fire, without which fire can no more be fire, is the *Dharma* of the fire. Heat is the *Dharma* of the fire; coldfire we are yet to come across! Sweetness is the *Dharma* of sugar; sweetless sugar is a myth. Fluidity is the *Dharma* of water: solid water is a dream!

Every object in the world has two types of properties: (a) the essential and (b) the non-essential. A substance can remain even when its "non-essential" qualities are absent, but it cannot remain without its "essential" property. The colour of the flame, the length and width of the tongues of flame, are all the "non-essential" properties of fire, but the essential property of it is heat. This essential property of a substance is called its *Dharma*.

What exactly then is the *Dharma* of man? The colour of the skin, the innumerable endless varieties of emotions and thoughts—in short the nature, the conditions and the capacities of the body, mind and intellect—are the "non-essential" factors in the human personality, when they are compared with the Touch of Life, the Divine Consciousness, expressed through them all. Without the *Atman* man cannot exist; it is That that gives the basis of existence. Therefore, the "essential" *Dharma* of man is the Divine Spark of Existence, the Infinite Lord.

With the understanding of the term *Dharma* we shall appreciate how from the mere ethical and moral rules of conducts all duties in life, all duties towards relations, friends, community, nation and the world, all our obligations to our environment, all our affections, reverence, charity and sense of goodwill—all have been considered as

our *Dharma* in our books. In and through such actions, physical, mental and intellectual, a man will bring forth the expression of his true *Dharma*—his divine status as the All-pervading Self. To live truly as the *Atman*, and to express Its Infinite Perfection through all our actions and in all our contacts with the world outside, we will have to rediscover our *Dharma*.

The Self is realized only when we have withdrawn our false indentifications with the body, mind and intellect. Due to this clinging attachment to these vehicles, we are today expressing in our existence the *dharma*s of these matter-made vehicles. We live as though we are the body, or we exist dancing to the tunes that are struck by the emotions in us, or we get ourselves kicked and played about here and there by our own intellect's unpredictable suggestions. Though in a sense man's "essential" nature—primary property—*Dharma* is to be the Infinite, Divine, All-blissful *Atman*, he behaves as though he is a mere composite of the physical, psychological, and the intellectual beings. All the sorrows and agitations, regrets and disappointments, passions, and pains are dividends paid by the body, mind and intellect to the false and the deluded identifier—the ego.

If we have thus understood the word *Dharma* in all its implications, then this most glorious stanza in the Geeta shall sing its song directly to us. There are, no doubt, a few other stanzas in the Geeta wherein the Lord has almost directly commanded us to live a certain way-of-life and has promised that in case we obey His instructions He shall directly take the responsibility of guiding us towards His own Being. But nowhere has the Lord so directly and openly expressed His divine willingness to undertake the service of His devotee as in this stanza.

He wants the meditator to accomplish three distinct adjustments in his inner personality. They are : (1) Renouncing all *Dharmas*, through meditation, (2) come to My surrender alone, and while one is in the state of meditation let him (3) stop all worries. And as a reward Lord Krishna promises, "*I shall release you from all sins.*" This is a promise given to all mankind. Geeta is a universal scripture ; it is a Bible of Man ; the Koran of the Humanity ; the dynamic scripture of the Hindus.

Abandoning all Dharma (*Sarwa Dharman Parityajya*)—As we have said above *Dharma* is "the law of being", and we have already noticed that nothing can continue its existence when once it is divorced from its *Dharma*. And yet, Krishna says, "come to my surrender, after renouncing all *Dharmas*". Does it then mean that our definition of Dharma is wrong ? Or is there a contradiction in this stanza ? Let us see.

As a mortal finite ego, the seeker is living, due to his identification, the *Dharmas* of his body, mind and intellect, and exists in life as a mere perceiver, or feeler or thinker. The perceiver-feeler-thinker-personality in us is the individuality that expresses itself as our ego. These are not our 'essential' *Dharmas*. And since these are the 'non-essentials,' "*renouncing all Dharmas*" means "ending the ego".

This is a stanza applicable while in the seat of meditation. The rest of the time also we can charter our way-of-life basing our attitude towards various things and beings upon the sacred suggestion in this loving Commandment of the Lord. All disturbances in meditation arise out of the self-asserting ego in us. In spite of ourselves, the meditator in us finds himself bumped out, of his gathered tranquillity

within, on to the rough seas of our physical appetites, or emotional cravings, or intellectual demands.

To “renounce”, therefore, means here “not to allow ourselves to fall again and again into this state of identification with the outer envelopments of matter around us”. Extrovert tendencies of the mind are to be renounced. “Develop introspection diligently” is the deep suggestion in the phrase “*renouncing all Dharmas*”.

Come to Me alone for shelter: (*Mamekam Saranam Vraja*)—The self-withdrawal from our extrovert nature will be impossible unless the mind is given a positive method of developing its introverted attention. By single-pointed steady contemplation upon Me, the Self, which is the One without a second, we can successfully accomplish our total withdrawal from the misinterpreting equipments of the body, mind and intellect*.

The philosophers in India were never satisfied with a negative approach in their instructions; there are more *do's* than *don'ts* in them. This dynamically practical nature of our philosophy, which is native to our traditions, is amply illustrated in this stanza when Lord Krishna commands His devotees to come to His shelter whereby they can accomplish the renunciation of all their false identifications..

Be not grieved: (*Ma Suchah*): When both the above conditions are accomplished, the seeker reaches a state of growing tranquillity in meditation. But it will all be a waste

* We have often in the previous chapters explained the dynamic positivity of the Hindu approach to Truth.

if this subjective peace, created after so much of labour, were not to form a steady and firm platform for his personality to spring forth into the realms of the Divine Consciousness. The spring-board must stay under our feet, supply the required propulsion for our inward dive. But unfortunately the very anxiety to reach the Infinite weakens the platform. It, like a dream-bridge, disappears at the withering touch of the anxieties in the meditator. During meditation, when the mind has been persuaded away from all its restless preoccupations with the outer vehicles, and brought again and again steadily to contemplate upon the Self, the infinite, Krishna wants the seeker to renounce all his "anxieties to* realize". Even a desire to realize is a disturbing thought that can destroy the final achievement.

I shall release you from all sins—That which brings about agitations in the bosom and thereby causes dissipation of the energies in man is called a sin. The actions themselves can cause subtle exhaustions of the human power. And no action can be undertaken without bringing our mind and intellect into it. In short, the mind and intellect will have to always come in contact with every action. Actions leave thus their "foot prints", as it were, upon the mental stuff, and these marks channelise the thought-flow and shape the psychological personality. These residual impressions, left in our inner personality, when our mind has gone through its experiences, are called the *vasanas*.

Good *vasanas* bring forth a steady stream of good thoughts as efficiently as bad *vasanas* would erupt bad

* The same idea we have met with in Chapter VI-25 when after explaining the ways of developing concentration the Lord advised: "*Na Kinchidapi Chintayet*".

thoughts. So long as the thoughts are flowing mind survives—whether good or otherwise, it is. Completely to erase all *vasanas* is to stop all thoughts, i.e. total cessation of thought-flow that is “mind”. Transcending of the mind-intellect-equipment is to reach the plane of Pure Consciousness, the Krishna Reality.

As a seeker renounces more and more of his identifications with his outer matter envelopments through a process of steady contemplation and meditation upon the Lord of his heart, he grows in his visions. In the newly awakened sensitive consciousness, he becomes more and more poignantly aware of the amount of *vasanas* he has to exhaust. “*Be not grieved*”, assures the Lord, for, “*I shall release you from all sins*”—the disturbing thought-gurgling, action prompting, desire-breeding, agitation-brewing *vasanas*, the sins.

The stanza is important inasmuch as this is one of the few powerfully worded verses in the Geeta wherein Lord, the Infinite, personally undertakes to do something helpful to the seeker in case the Spiritual hero in him is ready to offer his ardent co-operation and put forth his best efforts. All through the days of seeking a *Sadhaka* can assure himself a steady progress in spirituality only when he is able to keep within himself a salubrious mental climate of warm optimism. To despair and to weep, to feel dejected and disappointed, is to invite a restlessness of the mind, and naturally, therefore, the spiritual unfoldment is ever in the offing. The stanza is indeed in its deep imports and wafting suggestions, a peroration in itself of the entire philosophical poem, the Geeta.

“Having concluded the entire doctrine of the Geeta Sashtra in this discourse and having also briefly and conclusively restated the doctrine in order to impress it more firmly, the

Lord proceeds now to state the rule that should be borne in mind while imparting this knowledge to others : ”

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥६७॥

67. *idam te na tapaskaya
na bhaktaya kadacana
na ca susrusave vacyam
na ca mam yo bhyasuyati*

इदम्—This, ते—by you, न—not, अतपस्काय—to one who is devoid, of austerity, न—not, अभक्ताय—to one who is not devoted कदाचन—never, न—not, च— and, अशुश्रूषवे—to one who does not render service or who desireth not to listen, वाच्यम्—to be spoken, न—not, च—and, माम्—me, यः— who, अभ्यसूयति—cavils at (talks ill of Me).

67. This is never to be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion, nor to one who does not render service or who desires not to listen, nor to one who cavils at Me—talks ill of Me.

In almost all scriptural text-books we find, in their closing stanzas, a description of the type of students to whom this knowledge can be imparted. The *Acharyas* give an appendix to indicate the type of students who will be best suited for the study of the *Sastra*. Following faithfully this great tradition, here also we have this enumeration of the necessary qualifications for a true student of the

Geeta. These are not as many tariff walls raised round the treasure-house of the Geeta, in order to protect some vested interests and provide some people a kind of monopoly in trading upon the wealth of ideas in the Discourses. On the other hand, we shall find that these qualifications are adjustments in the inner personality of the student. And a bosom so tuned up is the right vehicle that can not only absorb the knowledge but daringly invest that knowledge in living life and thus earn the joy of wisdom.

Since these are the adjustments that are necessary within a student, it also implies that he who fails to appreciate fully the contents of the Geeta can come to polish his instruments better if he tries to cultivate these very same qualities. In short, the stanza under discussion tells us of those who cannot be benefitted by the study of the Geeta.

Those who do not live an austere life : Those who do not have any control over their body and mind ; who have dissipated their physical and mental energies in the wrong direction, and have thus become impotent bodily, mentally and intellectually—to them “*Never is this to be spoken by you*”. For, it will not be beneficial to them. There is not a trace of prejudice in this stanza. It is not equivalent to saying “please don’t sow the seeds upon the rocks”, for, the sower will never be able to reap, as nothing can grow on the rocks.

Tapas is a practice of self-denial so that the energies that are dissipated through indulgence are conserved and they are intelligently redirected to win the ampler fields of spiritual unfoldment. *Tapas* is, therefore, a plan which consists of: (1) conservation of all energies wasted, meaning economisation of the expenditure of energy ; (2) pre-

servation of the energies so saved ; and (3) redirection and re-employing this new-found energies in the constructive fields of self-unfoldment. Those who are not practising *Tapas* are not really fit to court and gain the loving embrace of the rejuvenating philosophy in the Geeta.

Those who have no devotion : That is those who do not have the capacity to identify themselves with the ideal that they want to reach. If one cannot sympathise with an ideal one cannot absorb or assimilate the higher ideal shown to one. An ideal however intellectually well understood, unless it is brought about to express in life, it cannot yield its full benefit. Hugging on to the ideal inwardly in a clasp of love, is devotion.

Those who do not render service : We have seen earlier, almost in all chapters, Krishna again and again insisting that selfless activity is not only a means for the *Sadhak*, but it is at once the field where the perfect masters discover their fulfilment. Seekers who are not able to serve others, who are selfish, who have no human qualities, who have never felt a sympathetic love for others—such persons as are merely consumers and not producers of joy for others, invariably fail to understand or appreciate or come to live the joys of the Krishna-way-of-life.

Those who are cavilling at Me : Those who murmur against Me. If we do not respect and revere our teacher we can never learn from him. The first person singular used in the Geeta is identical with the Self, the goal and, therefore, it means, “ those who are not able to respect philosophy.” Forceful conversion may enhance the neumerical strength of a faith, but self-development and inner unfoldment cannot come by that way. Religion should

not be forced upon anyone. One who has mentally rejected a philosophy can never, even when one has understood it will, come to live up to it. Therefore, those who are entertaining a secret disrespect to a philosophy should not be forced to study it.

Stanzas like this in a *Sastra* are meant as instructions for the students on how to attune themselves properly so that they can make a profitable study of the Geeta. None should expect an immediate result out of his study of the Geeta. Personality readjustments cannot be made overnight. There is no miracle preached in the Geeta.

Indirectly the stanza also gives some sane instructions by its suggestions. If a student feels that he cannot satisfactorily understand the Geeta, he has only to sharpen his inner nature further by the above subjective processes. Just as we cleanse a mirror to remove the dimness in the reflection, so too by properly readjusting the mind-intellect-equipment its sensitivity to absorb the Geeta philosophy can be raised.

Now the Lord proceeds to state what benefits will accrue to him who hands down his knowledge to others in the society.

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥६८॥

68. *ya idam paramam guhyam
madbhaktesv abhidhasyati
bhaktim mayi param kṛtvā
mam evai syaty asamayah*

यः - Who, इमम् - this, परमम् - supreme, गुह्यम् - secret, मद्भक्तेषु - my devotees, अभिधास्यति - shall de-

clare, भक्तिम्-devotion, मयि-in Me, परां-supreme, कृत्वा-having done, माम्-to Me, एव-even, एष्यति-shall come, असंशयः - doubtless.

68. He, who with supreme devotion to Me, will teach this supreme secret to My devotees, shall doubtless come to Me.

The stanza under review and the following one are both glorifications of a teacher who can give the correct interpretation of the Geeta and make the listener follow the Krishna way of life. "Fight the evil down whether it is within or without" is the cardinal principle that Krishna advocates to the prince in Arjuna. In order to impart such a culture the teacher cannot be merely a scholar, but must have the Krishna ability. Hence the glorification.

It is useless to impart this knowledge to those who have no taste for it. Hunger alone can lend taste to the fare. If a student himself has not any sense of urgency for a total revolution in himself, he cannot be goaded to live the Geeta-life. The Lord's Song is an answer to those who have the mysterious spiritual thirst to live a fuller and more dynamic life. Hence it is said "that this deeply profound philosophy" (*Paramam Guhyam*) must be imparted to "my devotees" (*Mad-Bhakteshu*).

Devotion to the Lord (*Bhakti*) means capacity to identify with the ideals and, therefore, the philosophy of the ideal way-of-life can profitably be imparted only to those persons who have a capacity to identify themselves with the ideal and thereafter live up to it.

It is not sufficient that the student alone has this capacity to identify himself with the higher ideals, but the

teacher also must have (*Bhakti*) perfect attunement with the Supreme Krishna-Reality. Such an individual who is himself rooted in his attunement, and who tries to impart this knowledge to others, and thereby constantly spends himself in reflections upon the philosophical ideals of the Geeta—"he shall certainly (*Asamsayah*) come to me alone".

This is in the correct spirit of the Upanishadic tradition. In the Upanishads also we find the teachers insisting upon the glory in the spreading of the spiritual knowledge. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* the very parting advice of the teacher to the taught contains an oft reiterated injunction that he must practise not only study of the scripture himself, but must continuously spend himself in carrying the torch of knowledge among the masses.* This has been prescribed as an imperative duty for all *Brakmins* by the Rishis.

An educated man should, in his gratitude, feel himself much indebted to the Muse of Wisdom. In fact, this indebtedness is actually called in our tradition as Rishi-indebtedness, (*Rishi Rinam*), to absolve ourselves from which we are asked everyday to study their works and to preach their ideas. When we lost these two great ideals, when the latter Brahmin generations conveniently forget their duties and responsibilities, and thus disobeyed this glorious injunction of the great Rishis, we started our cultural decadence.

Philosophy is the basis of any culture. The Hindu culture can revive and assert its glory only when it is

* "Swadhyaya Pravachana Cha" — Taittiriya Upanishad. Section 1.

nurtured and nourished by the sane philosophy of India which is contained in the *Upanishads*. The fathers of our culture, the great Rishis, knowing this secret had urged that the students of the Scriptures must not rob this knowledge and keep it to themselves, but must convey it with free mobility to others. In this way alone the culture can be successfully brought into the dark chambers of the people's life.

When a stone is thrown into a pond of water, it makes a disturbance; and it in concentric circles ripples out and widens itself to create many more ripples until the movement felt in the centre is progressively conveyed towards the outermost banks all around. If instead of water it is a basin of oil, the ripples made widen out and die before they reach the banks. In case, it is moulten coal-tar, the stone makes a disturbance only at the point where it has struck the surface and there it sinks to disappear leaving not a mark even on the surface of the coal-tar. The disturbance gets no chance to ripple out its grace to any farther point.

From the above analogy, if a student, who has understood even a wee bit of our cultural tradition, does not convey it to others, it means that there is no mobility of intelligence, or fluidity of inspiration in him. The majority of us today are having our hearts filled with the coal-tar of mental stupor; a few intelligent ones in the country have hearts full of some oily contents; but the Rishis are satisfied only when all the students of the Geeta become as mobile as the waters of the lake Manasarovar, conveying ripples after ripples of their original thinking to lap on to all those around him. One who is thus capable of conveying the truths of the Geeta to others is complimented here with the promise of the highest reward: "he shall doubtless come to Me".

Not only this, but the Lord expresses that He loves such a teacher much more than anybody else :

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृतमः ।

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥६९॥

69. *na ca tasman manusyesu
kascin me priyakrttamah
bhavita na ca me tasmad
anyah priyatara bhuvi*

न-Not, च-and, तस्मात्-than he, मनुष्येषु-among men, कश्चित्-any, मे-of me, प्रियकृतमः -one who does dearer service, भविता-shall be, न-not, च-and, मे-of Me, तस्मात्-than he, अन्यः- another, प्रियतरः -dearer, भुवि-on the earth.

69. Nor is there any among men who does dearer service to Me, nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me than he.

In Hinduism there is no proselytism—it is true. We do not believe in compelling others to have faith in the Eternal Reality. Compulsion becomes a necessity where intellectual conversion is not possible. Since we have got a completely logical and entirely convincing philosophy, which can generate in us our faith in the Ultimate, compulsion is no more needed. Human intellect has intrinsically such an honesty of conviction, that once it has understood some way-of-life, and has accepted certain values of life as a result of its understanding, it cannot but live its own convictions. It is only in this sense that the Hindu Philosophy

and our ancient teachers discarded proselytism and forceful conversion as barbarous methods not fit to the dignity of any truly spiritual system.

Unfortunately this glorious creed has been so thoroughly misunderstood in India that we have long ago stopped our missionary work in propagating the immortal truths of our inimitable culture. Since the Christian Missionaries act with a sole ambition of conversion, the educated Indian in his thoughtlessness has from his childhood on, associated these two ideas together in his mind. When he has understood the saner idea that proselytism is a crime against man and God, he seems to understand that missionary work was never contemplated by the Rishies. The stanza in the Geeta indeed gives the lie to such a fallacious conclusion. To spread the idea among the people, to carry the torch of knowledge earlier lit up at the Master's Feet, to convey it far to provide light wherever there is darkness, to keep oneself ever bubbling with an inspired enthusiasm to pour out one's own convictions into the hearts of others—in short, *Vidyadhan* is, in Hinduism, a duty religiously imposed upon all students. Knowledge hoarded and secreted brings about a sadder poverty than the wealth aggrandised and cornered in a society.

All these ideas are beautifully brought out when Krishna again takes up in this stanza the glorification of the teacher who teaches the Geeta knowledge. Herein Krishna explains how such a man could reach Him so easily, as the Lord had declared in the previous verse. The Geetacharya emphasises that such an individual is "*dearest to My heart, as I find none equal to him in the world*". Not only that there is none to compare with him among the present generation, but there *shall* never be (*Bhavita Na Cha*) anyone even in

future times to come, as dear to the Lord as such an individual, who spends his time in spreading the knowledge of what little he has understood from the Geeta. A preacher* is sacred in the Hindu lore.

Earlier in the Geeta a great psychological truth was hinted at, which was often repeated throughout the entire length of the Divine Song, and this cardinal secret is that he who can bring his entire mind to the contemplation of the Divine, to the total exclusion of all dissimilar thought-currents, he will come to experience the Infinite Divine. A student of the Geeta, who is spending his time in serious studies and in deep reflections upon them, and in preaching what he has understood, comes to revel in understanding and thus reach identification with an inner peace that is the essence of Truth. Therefore, Krishna says, "there can never be any other man more dear to Me than such a preacher; for, he is doing the greatest service to Me by earnestly and devotedly trying to convey the immortal principles expounded in the Geeta."

* In this context it is interesting to note how the elderly Mahatmas now living in the Himalayan valleys look at the Missionary zeal of the young *Mahatmas*. Recently I had to face one of the elderly Mahatmas in Utterakasi. When in conversation I reported to him, with a naive enthusiasm and a sense of pardonable satisfaction, that my work of spreading the contents of our scriptures is being slowly recognised and appreciated by the young generation. The ancient brows were slightly raised to express an impossible surprise. There was an excruciating silence for a few minutes; and my flow of words stopped the moment I saw the screaming criticism on those sacred brows. After a time

It is not necessary in this context that we must first become ourselves masters of the entire Geeta-knowledge. Whatever one has understood, one must immediately, with an anxious love, learn to give it out to those who are ignorant of even that much. Also one must sincerely and honestly try to live the principles in one's own life—"such a man is dearest to Me"

Not only the preacher but even an ardent student is congratulated in the following stanza.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।

ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ॥७०॥

70. *adhyesyate ca ya imam
dharmyam samvadam avayoh
jnanayajnena tena ham
istah syam iti me matih*

अध्येष्यते-Shall study, च - and, यः - who, इमम् - this, धर्म्यम् - sacred, संवादम् - dialogue, आवयोः - of ours, ज्ञानयज्ञेन - by the sacrifice of wisdom, तेन - by him, अहं - I, इष्टः - worshiped, स्यां - (I) shall have been, इति - thus, मे - my, मतिः - conviction.

the revered Swamiji said: "Chinmaya, you better stay here now and no more need you go out in the world".

No doubt I was at a loss to understand what he meant. Explaining his idea, the revered Swamiji after a pause continued, "If you think that you are spreading these

70. And he who will study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I shall have been worshipped by the "sacrifice-of-wisdom," such is my conviction.

Having thus glorified all teachers of the Geeta who carry the Wisdom of the sacred discourse to the understanding of the masses, the Geeta here is glorifying even students who are studying this Sacred-text of the Lord's Song. The great philosophy of life given out here as a conversation between Krishna, the Infinite, and Arjuna, the finite man, has such a compelling charm about it, that even those who read it superficially will also be slowly dragged into the very sanctifying depths of it. Such an individual is even unconsciously egged on to make a pilgrimage to the vaster possibilities within himself, and, naturally, he comes to evolve himself through what Krishna terms here as "*Gyana Yagna*".

In our *Sastras* sacrifices fall under four distinct categories (1) Rituals (*Vidhi*), (2) Repetition (*Japa*), (3) Muttering or whispering (*Upamsu*) and (4) Mental (*Manasa*). The "Wisdom Sacrifice" (*Gyana Yagna*) falls under the last category and, therefore, it is glorified.

In a Yagna, Lord Fire is invoked in the sacrificial altar, and into it are offered oblations by the devotees.

spiritual ideas, my boy, by the time you have spread the Sacred ideals of Vedanta among the people, you will be a lost soul; because, you will have by then developed a terrible amount of irrepressible ego! Our *Acharyas* have advised us that after *Sannyas* we have only one sole duty in life—to reflect upon the truths of the scriptures and thus meditate upon the Infinite".

From this analogy the term *Gyana Yagna* has been originally coined and used in the Geeta. Study of the Scriptures and regular contemplation upon their deep significance kindle the "Fire of Knowledge" in us and into this the intelligent seeker offers, as his oblation, his own false values and negative tendencies. This is the significance of the metaphorical phrase *Gyana Yagna*. The Lord, therefore, admits but a truth in the Spiritual Science when He declares that those who study the Geeta—contemplate upon its meaning, understand it thoroughly—and those who can, at the altars of their well kindled understanding, sacrifice their own egocentric misconceptions about themselves and the world around them, are certainly the greatest devotees of the Infinite.

There is a subtle difference between *reading* and *studying*: newspapers are *read*, market tendencies are *studied* by the man of this age. In *reading* it is mainly an attempt to satisfy a curiosity of what the theme is; but the process of *study* is not only a thirst to understand the theme, but, a hunger to gain into ourselves the perfections discussed therein through reflection and practice.

"How dissemination of knowledge would bloat one's ego?" I was not convinced. When I expressed my inability to follow his line of thinking, that revered old Saint of Knowledge and Wisdom kindly smiled and patting me paternally on my back, said, "Son, devotees might come and ask of us their doubts. You may give your discourses in the cities; there is none who is doing it now as efficiently as you. But one thing we should do. Never talk to the audience; talk to your own mind and make it a louder reflection in yourself to yourself. Thereby you will not only

When a rusted key is heated in fire, the rust falls off and the key gains its original native polish. So too our personality when reacted with the knowledge of the Geeta chastens itself, since our wrong tendencies, unhealthy *vasanas*, and false sense-of-ego, risen from false-knowledge (*Agyanam*) all get burnt up with the Right-Knowledge (*Gyanam*).

After thus explaining so far the glory of the teacher and the benefits of study, in the following stanza Krishna indicates that even “listening” to the Geeta discourses is beneficial.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभलोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥७१॥

71. *sraddhavan anasuyas ca
rrnuyad api yo narah
so pi muktah subhaml lokan
prapnuyat punyakarmanam*

श्रद्धावान् - Full of faith, अनसूयः - free from malice, च - and, शृणुयात् - may hear, अपि - also, यः - who, नरः - man, सः - he, अपि - also, मुक्तः - liberated,

stop the growth of the ego in you but also will be talking to the mind and heart of your audience. May your missionary lectures and inspired preachings be a homely talk and a fruitful discussion between your own higher intellect and lower mind. If those who are around you are benefited by your own self-reflection, it shall be the glory of the Lord and not your personal efficiency”.

शुभान्-happy, लोकान्-worlds, प्राप्नुयात्-shall attain,
पुण्यकर्मणाम्-of those of righteous deeds.

71. The man also, who hears this, full of faith and free from malice, he too, liberated, shall attain to the happy worlds of those righteous deeds.

The process of study of a text book dealing with the "science of life" is different from the process of study adopted in all other scientific fields. Herein in order to reach our fulfilment in the study we must actually come to experience the excellences indicated by the teacher and the perfections promised by the Rishies. That means we have to read and understand, reflect and digest what we have gathered from our studies, assimilate this knowledge into an intimate conviction through attempts at living them, and ultimately come to experience the very perfection, which it promises.

In short, the student of the Geeta cannot stand apart from his text book, and merely learn to appreciate the theme of the Lord's Song. An all-out ardent woeing of the Geeta by the student, from all its levels, is necessary, if the study of the Geeta is to really fulfil in the student's own spiritual unfoldment. Consequently, Krishna indicates here two conditions fulfilling which alone can one profitably listen to the Geeta-discourses and can hope to come to gather therein a large dividend of joy and perfection.

I was smothered down by the beauty and depth of significance of this sacred attitude of the ideal Hindu Missionary in India. Glory to the Rishis !

One of Faith (*Sradhavan*) : The term *Sradha* in Sanskrit though usually translated as “faith” actually means much more than what the term indicates in the English Language and the Western tradition. *Sradha* has been defined as that faculty in the human intellect which gives it the capacity to dive deep into and discover the subtler meaning of the scriptural declarations, and having thus understood helps the individual to absorb that understanding into the wharp and woof of the student’s own intellect.*

Therefore, that faculty in the intellect (1) to understand the subtle import of the sacred words, (2) to absorb the same, (3) to assimilate and (4) to make the student live upto those very same ideals is *Sradha*. Naturally, listening to the Lord’s Discourses can be fruitful only to those who have developed this essential faculty in themselves.

Free from malice (*Anasuya*) : Those who are free from malice against the teachings of the Geeta alone can undertake, with a healthy attitude of mind, a deeper and detailed study of the same. No doubt, Hinduism never asks any student to read and study a philosophy with an implicit and ready faith. But the human mind, remaining as it is, will grow too dull and unresponsive when it has pre-conceived idle prejudices against the very theme of its study.

* Please refer Swamiji’s discourses on Sri Sankaracharya’s Viveka-Choodamani : “*Sastrasya Guruvakyasya Satyabuddhi-Avadhanam, Saa Sradha*”.

FAITH——“Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark”

—Tagore.

The intellect can receive the ideals preached in the Geeta only through the sense organs, and these ideas must reach the intellect filtered through the mind. If the mind contains any malice towards the very philosophy, or the philosopher, the arguments and the goal indicated therein cannot ever appeal to the student's intellect. No doubt, the student should bring in his own constructive criticism of and independent judgment on what he studies, but he must be reasonably available to listen patiently to what the scripture has to say. In short, a student of Religion must learn to keep an open mind and not condemn the philosophy even before understanding what it has to say.

Such an individual who has attentively listened to the Geeta, who has intellectually absorbed and assimilated the knowledge, "he too", says the Lord, "gets liberated" from the present state of confusions and sorrows, entanglements and bondages in his personality, and reaches a state of inner tranquillity and happiness.

The kingdom of joy lies within all of us. The heaven is not somewhere yonder there ; it is here and now. Happiness and sorrow are both within us. To the extent we learn and live the principles of right living as enunciated in the Geeta, to that extent, we shall come to gain a cultural eminence within ourselves and live an ampler life of greater achievements.

It is the duty of a teacher to see that the student understands the great goal and the path completely. If the path advised is found to be inadequate to bless the student it is the duty of the teacher to find out ways and means of making the student discover his own balance.

Hence in the following stanza we find Krishna enquiring whether Arjuna has understood what He had expounded in these eighteen chapters.

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।

कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥७२॥

72. *kaccid etac chrutam partha
tvayai kagrena cetasa
kaccid ajnanasammohah
pranastas te dhanamjaya*

कच्चित्-Whether, एतत्-this, श्रुतम्-heard, पार्थ - O Partha, त्वया - by thee, एकाग्रेण - by single-pointed, चेतसा - by mind, कच्चित् - whethar, अज्ञानसंमोहः - the distraction caused by ignorance, प्रनष्टः - has been dispelled, ते - your, धनंजय - O Dhananjaya.

72. Has this been heard, O son of Pritha with single-pointed mind? Has the distraction caused by your ignorance been dispelled, O Dhananjaya?

Here we read Lord Krishna, the teacher of the Geeta, putting a leading question to his disciple, Arjuna, giving the student a chance to say as to how much the latter is benefited by the eighteen discourses. Of course, Krishna had no doubt about it; but it is only like a doctor, who, confident of his own achieved success, looks at the beaming face of the revived patient and enquiries "how are you feeling now?" This is only to enjoy the beaming satisfaction that comes to play on the face of the relieved patient.

“*Have you been listening with attentive mind?*”: The very question implies that if you have been attentive you must have understood sufficiently the logic in the things, beings and happenings around and, therefore, your relationship with them also. The study of philosophy of Vedanta broadens our mind’s vision and we start re-cognising, in a newer light, the same old scheme-of-things around us, and then its previous ugliness seems to get lifted as though by magic.

“*Has your distraction of thought, caused by ignorance, been dispelled?*” The false values that we entertain distorts our vision of the world and our judgment of affairs. The delusion of mind was expressed by Arjuna in the opening chapters of the Geeta.*

Amputating a septic toe to save the body is no crime but it is a life-giving blessing; it should not be considered as a toe destroyed, but it must be recognised as a body saved. The cultural crisis of those times had ordered that the *Kauravas* must rise up in arms against the beauty and softness of the spiritual culture of the land. Arjuna has been called upon by the era to champion the cause of the righteous. It was indeed a false reading of the situation that perverted the judgment in the Pandava Prince, as a consequence of which he became utterly broken down and came to entertain a neurotic condition in himself. The fundamental cause of all his confusions was his own “non-apprehension of reality” called in Vedanta Philosophy as “ignorance” (*Agyana*). When this ignorance is removed

* Read in Chapter 1 stanzas 33 to 46 and in chapter 2 stanzas 4 and 5.

by the “apprehension of the reality”, termed as “knowledge” *Gyan*), the entire by-products of “ignorance” are all in one sweep eliminated. Hence the logic of this enquiry from the teacher to the taught.

True “knowledge” expresses itself in one’s own dexterity in action and it should fulfil itself in the splendour of its achievements in the service of the society. In case Arjuna has understood the philosophy of the Geeta he will no more hesitate to meet the challenge in its own stride as it reaches him. This seems to be the unsaid idea in the heart of the Lord.

Arjuna confesses that his confusions have ended.

अर्जुन उवाच

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥७३॥

Arjuna Uvaca

73, *nasto mohah smrtir labdha*
ivatprasadan maya cyuta
sthitoh smi gatasamdehah
karisye vacanam tava

नष्टः - Is destroyed, मोहः - delusion, स्मृतिः - memory, (Knowledge), लब्धा - has been gained, त्वत्प्रसादात् - through your grace, मया - by me, अच्युत - O Achyuta, स्थितः - firm, अस्मि - (I) am, गतसन्देहः - freed from doubts, करिष्ये - (I) will do, वचनम् - word, तव - your.

Arjuna Said :

73. Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained my memory (knowledge) through your grace, O Achyuta. I am firm; my doubts are gone. I will do according to your word (bidding).

Somewhat like one who has suddenly awakened from an unconscious state, Arjuna with a regained self-recognition assuredly confesses that his confusions have ended—not because he has implicitly swallowed the arguments in the discourses of the Geeta, but because, as Arjuna himself says, “I have gained a *re-cognition* of my real nature. The hero in me has been now awakened and the neurotic condition that had temporarily conquered my within has been totally driven out”.

Such a revival within and a rediscovery of our personality are possible for all of us if only we truly understand the significance of the Geeta Philosophy. The Infinite nature of Perfection is our own; It is not something that we have to gain from somewhere at the intervention of some outer agency. This angelic and mighty Being within ourselves is now lying veiled beneath our own ego-centric confusions and abject fears. Even while we are confused and confounded, and helplessly suffering the tragic sorrows of our ego, we are *in reality* none other than our own self. When the dream ends, the confusions also end, and we get awakened to our real nature. So too in life. This awakening of the angel in us is the ending of the beast within.

In this new found equilibrium, born out of his Wisdom, he experiences an unshakable balance established firmly upon its own firm foundations. All vasillations of the

mind, doubts and despairs, dejections and hesitations, fears and weaknesses have left him (*Gata-sandeha*).

With such a revived personality when Arjuna re-evaluates the situation he finds no difficulty at all to discover what exactly is his duty. Arjuna openly declares, “*I will do the word*”. In the Geeta it has already been pointed out that Lord Krishna stands for the Divine Spark of Existence manifested as the “pure intelligence”. Arjuna here confesses that no more shall he listen to the whisperings of the lower beast in him: the misguiding mind and its agitations.

All students—who have thus fully understood the Geeta and have in themselves acquired a clear picture of the goal of life, and who know what path to follow and how to withdraw themselves from the false by-lanes of existence—will come to surrender themselves, each to his own integrated inner personality. To surrender ourselves to our own “higher intellect” and to declare confidently and with faith “*I shall do thy bidding*” is the beginning and the end of all spiritual life.

Sanjaya glorifies the Geetacharya and His Divine Song, the Geeta.

संजय उवाच

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
संवादमिमश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥७४॥

Samjaya Uvaca

74. *ity aham vasudevasya
parthasya ca mahatmanah
samvadam-imam asrausam
adbhutam romaharsanam*

इति - Thus, अहम् - I, वासुदेवस्य - of Vasudevā,
 पार्थस्य - of Partha, च - and, महात्मनः - high-souled,
 संवादम् - dialogue, इमम् - this, अश्रौषम् - (I) have
 heard, अद्भुतम् - wonderful, रोमहर्षणम् - which
 causes the hair to stand on end.

Sanjaya Said :

74. Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between
 Vasudeva and the high-souled Partha, which
 causes the hair to stand on end.

In the previous stanza, when one closely follows the full
 significance of the assertion made by the rediscovered, and
 therefore revived Arjuna, one cannot avoid remembering a
 parallel declaration made by another teacher of the world,
 when he revived from his temporary confusion (*Arjunasthi-
 ti*). When he regained his spiritual balance, which he, as
 it were, lost temporarily while carrying the cross through
 the taunting crowd, Jesus also cried: "*Thy will be done*".
 Here Arjuna, revived by the Grace of Krishna, similarly
 cries, "I shall act according to your word (*Karishye Vacha-
 nam Thava*). In both the cases we find the statements are
 identical, and while declaring thus, there can be no more
 any sense of separative existence for the declarer from the
 Infinite Godhead.

The Pandava Prince earlier, at the opening of the Geeta,
 said to Govinda: "*I shall not fight*",* and became des-
 pondent. It is the same Arjuna now entirely revived and
 fully rehabilitated that declares, "I shall abide by Thy

* Read the Discourses on stanza 9 Chapter II.

will". The cure is complete, and with this the *Sastra* is also ended.

The Eighteen-chapter-long Geeta is a portion in Bhishmaparva in Maharabaratha. Vyasa the literary artist has to weave on this immortal poem in the warp and woof of the wider canvas of the classic. These closing five stanzas are made use of for this purpose. The beautiful pendant of the Geeta, so artistically perfected, is being hooked on to the wondrous necklace of Mahabaratha by these closing five stanzas, with which Sanjaya concludes his "running commentary", containing, in a very few chosen expressions, the glory of the Geeta, the miraculous revival of Arjuna, the subjective reaction in Sanjaya himself as he listened to this wondrous conversation, and a declaration of Sanjaya's own faith in the true culture of the Hindus.

"*Thus have I heard this dialogue between Vasudeva and the high souled Arjuna*"; In the context of the Vyasa-literature, the conversation between Vasudeva, Lord Krishna, and the son of Pritha, Arjuna, is but a silent mystic dialogue between the "higher" and the "lower" in man, the "spirit" and the "matter". Vasudeva means the Lord (*Deva*) of the Vasus; the eight Vasus (*Astha-vasu*) together preside over Time. Therefore, Vasudeva in its mystic symbolism stands for the Consciousness that illumines the "concept of Time" projected by the intellect of man—in short, Vasudeva is the Atma, the Self. *Partha* represents matter (earth) which is capable of shedding itself, sheath after sheath† and emerge out as the pure Eternal Spirit, the

† Refer the discussion of the five sheaths of matter (*Pancha-kosa*) discussed in Swamiji's Discourses of Tittreyopanishad; also read Sri Swamiji's book, "Meditation and Life."

Supreme. This act of undressing himself of his matter vestures (*Vasthrapaharana*) is man's highest art, the Art of Unveiling the Infinite through the finite. The technique of this art is the theme of the Geeta.

Wonderful (*Adbhutam*)—This philosophy of the Geeta listened to so far by Sanjaya is reviewed by him as miraculous, wonderful. Every philosophy, no doubt, is a marvel of man's intellect and its subtle visions and powers of comprehension. But the philosophy of the Geeta was indeed a shade more marvellous and wonderful to Sanjaya than all others philosophies, because, by the very touch of it, it had revived the blasted personality of Arjuna into a dynamic whole. Because of this practical demonstration of its powers to bless man, the Geeta philosophy has acquired to itself the rare shine of the marvellous.

It has proved, beyond all doubt, that every average human being is endowed with much potential power with which he can easily conquer all the expressions of life in him and command them to manifest exactly as he wants. He is the Lord of his life: the master of the vehicles, and not a victim of some other mightier Power who had created him, only to be endlessly teased by the whims and fancies of his own body, mind and intellect. When this truth is revealed, it is but human for Sanjaya in effect to exclaim, "Oh! what a marvellous revelation. What a stupendous demonstration!! *Adbhutam!!!*"

High-souled Partha—In the stanza Arjuna has been glorified and not Lord Krishna, the Parthasaradhi. The Pandava Prince, Arjuna, had the courage and heroism to come out of his mental confusions, when he gained the right knowledge from his master's teachings. Certain acts success-

fully undertaken by a child calls forth our admiration, but the same acts performed by a grown-up person, perhaps, look too ridiculous and childish. To the omnipotent Lord the declaration of the whole Geeta itself is but a love-play. But, for the confused Arjuna to understand the philosophy and heroically walk out of his natural confusions is indeed an achievement—something worthy of our appreciation. Thus, Krishna, the All-perfect, is almost ignored; but Arjuna, the mortal, who has understood the art of living as expounded in the Geeta, and had actually revived himself by living it, is heartily congratulated and glorified.

Sanjaya's sympathies were with the Pandavas; but as a personal minister he was eating the salt of Dritharashtra, and it was not *Dharma* for him to be disloyal to his master. At the same time, in the context of the politics of that time, Dhritharashtra was, perhaps, the only one who, even then, could stop the war. Diplomatically Sanjaya tries his best, in these stanzas, to bring into the blind man's heart the suggestion of a peace treaty. He makes the blind king understand that Lord Krishna has revived and reawakened the hero in Arjuna. The blind king is reminded of what the consequences would be: the death and disaster of his hundred children, the pangs of separation in his old age, the dishonour of it all—all these are brought home to Dritharashtra. But the tottering king's blindness seems to be not only physical but also mental and intellectual. The beseeching Sanjaya's moral suggestions only fall on the deaf ears of the blind elder.

Sanjaya expresses with open acknowledgement his indebtedness to Sri Vyasa Bhagavan :

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं मरम् ।

योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ॥७५॥

75. *vyasaprasadac chrutavan*
etad guhyam aham param
yogam yogesvarat krsnat
sakshat kathayatah svayam

व्यासप्रसादात् - Through the grace of Vyasa,
श्रुतवान् - I have heard, एतत् - this, गुह्यम् - secret,
अहं - I, परं - supreme, योगं - Yoga, योगेश्वरात् - from
the Lord of Yoga, कृष्णात् - from Krishna, साक्षात् -
directly, कथयतः - declaring, स्वयम् - Himself.

75. Through the grace of Vyasa I have heard, this
supreme and most secret Yoga, directly from
Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, Himself declaring it.

Before the Geeta Discourses were started, among the chivalrous champions who had assembled for the battle, Vyasa had approached Dritharashtra to offer him the power of vision to witness the war; however, the weak heart of the vile king had not the courage to accept the offer. While declining, the king had suggested that if this power could be given to Sanjaya, the king could, through the faithful minister, listen to a running commentary of what is happening on the Kurukshetra battle-field. It is thus from Vyasa that Sanjaya gained the special faculty for witnessing and listening to all that had happened and had been said in the distant battle-field, when he was only sitting in the carpeted chambers of the Kaurava palace. Grateful to Sri Veda

Vyasa for giving him this wonderful chance of listening to this “supreme and most profound yoga”, Sanjaya is mentally prostrating to the incomparable poet-sage, the author of the Mahabaratha.

Directly from Krishna Himself (*Yogeswara Krishnath*)—The suggestion is NOT that Sanjaya had never heard the philosophy of the Upanishads, ever before and that the novelty of the revelation had stunned him. But his joy is in that he has got a chance to listen to the Eternal Knowledge of the Upanishads directly from the Lord of all Yogas, Sri Krishna Himself (*Sakshath*) who had delivered it by His own sacred lips.

Here also we can see how Sanjaya is sincerely trying to make the blind Dritharashtra realise that it is not Krishna, the son of Devaki, nor the cow-herd boy, but it is the Lord Himself, the *Yogeswara*, who has revived Arjuna, and who is serving His devotee as His charioteer. The blind king is reminded that his children, though they have marshalled a larger army, stand really doomed for destruction, since they have to face the Infinite Lord Himself in their enemy ranks.

The deep impression, created by this irresistible philosophy on the devoted heart of Sanjaya is vividly painted :

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिदमुत्तम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥७६॥

76. *rajan samsmrtya-samsmrtya
samvadam imam adbhutam
kesavarjunayoh punyam
hrsyami ca muhur-muhuh*

राजन् - O King, संस्मृत्य - having remembered, संस्मृत्य - having remembered, संवादं - the dialogue, इममं - this, अद्भुतं - wonderful, केशवार्जुनयोः - between Kesava and Arjuna, पुण्यं - holy, हृष्यामि - (I) rejoice, च - and, मुहुः - again, मुहुः - again.

76. O King, remembering this wonderful and holy dialogue between Kesava and Arjuna I rejoice again and again

Herein we have a clear statement of Sanjaya's reactions on listening to the Lord's Sacred Song. He says "*this discourse between Krishna and Arjuna*"—between God and man, between the Perfect and the Imperfect, between the "higher" and the "lower"—is at once "*wonderful and holy*".

The vision and impression created in the heart by the philosophy that was heard are so deep and striking that Sanjaya admits how irresistible the memory of those words rise up again and again in his bosom, giving him "the thrill of joy" (*Harsham*).

Indirectly Vyasa is prescribing the method of study of the Geeta. It being "a handbook of instruction" on the Art of Living, it has to be read again and again, repeatedly reflected upon and continuously remembered, until the inner man in us is completely re-educated in the way-of-life that Geeta charts for man. The reward for such a painstaking study, and consistency of application has also been clearly pointed out.

One comes to rejoice again and again as one comes to recognise a definite purpose in the otherwise purposeless

pilgrimage of man, from the womb to the tomb, called the life. The study of the Geeta gives not only a purpose to our very existence but it has got a positive message of hope and cheer to deliver to the world. Geeta picks us up from the bye-lanes of life and enthrones us as the sovereign power that rules, commands and orders our own life within.

Thus Geeta is an infinite fountain-head of inspiration and thrilled joy. It provides our minds with a systematic scheme of re-education whereby it helps us to discover a secret power in ourselves to tackle intelligently the chaotic happenings around us, which constitute our world of challenges. The Geeta-educated man learns to recognise a rhythm, to see a beauty, and to hear a song in life—a life which was till then a mad death-dance of appearance and disappearances of things and beings.

Sanjaya confesses that not only the philosophy enchants his mind but even the memory of the Lord's wondrous form as the total manifested Universe has a magic of its own which warms up his heart.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।

विस्मयो मे महान्राजन्द्ध्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥७७॥

77. *tac ca samsmrtya-samsmrtya
rupam atyadbhutam hareh
vismayo me mahan rajan
hrsyami ca punah-punah*

तत् - That, च - and, संस्मृत्य - having remembered, संस्मृत्य - having remembered, रूपं - the form, अत्यद्भुतं - the most wonderful, हरेः - of Hari, विस्मयः

- wonder, मे - my, महान् - great, राजन् - O King,
हृष्यामि -(I) rejoice, च- and, पुनः - again, पुनः - again.

77. And remembering, remembering, also that most wonderful Form of Hari, great is my wonder, O king; and I rejoice again and again.

“As I often remember repeatedly that most wonderful form of Hari”—Lord Krishna, the charioteer, gave the vision of His Cosmic Form (*Viswaroopam*) in an earlier chapter*; it is that Form that is indicated by Sanjaya here. The Cosmic Form of the Lord is as impressive to the man of heart as the philosophy of the Geeta is unforgettable to the man of intelligence. The concept of Lord’s “total-form” is no doubt originated in the Geeta but it need not necessarily be a mere poetic vision of the great Vyasa. There are others whose experiences are almost parallel.†

* Refer the description of the Lord’s Cosmic Form as given in Chapter 11, stanza 5 to 47.

† In “Studies in the History and Method of Science” edited by Charles Singer (1937), the editor quotes the report of a vision which saint Hildegard (1098–1180) had; she saw “a fair human form” which declared to her His identity in almost identical words as the description in the Geeta: “I am that Supreme and fiery force that sends forth all the sparks of life. Death hath no part in me, yet do I allot it, wherefor I am girt about with wisdom as with wings. I am that living and fiery essence of the divine substance that glows in the beauty of the field. I shine in the waters. I burn in the Sun and the moon and the stars. Mine is that

To a great devotee, remembering the Form of the Beloved-of-his-heart is itself an ecstatic joy, and where love is, there, in repeated onward gushes, the mind automatically reaches, and every time his mind in that state of Love Divine recognises that every existing thing in the world, sentient and insentient, is but His incomparable Infinite Form. To such a devotee heat and cold are He. Joys and sorrows are but the play of the Lord ; honour and dishonour are but the teasing jokes of the Lover of his heart ! Recognising thus, in and through life, everywhere the Harmony of the Oneness, which he had seen in the Lord's Cosmic Form, the heart of a true devotee dances in joy at everything, on all occasions.

If the philosophy of the Geeta as it reveals to us the glorious purpose in life, inspires and thrills the thinking aspect in man, the vision of the smiling Lord of Brindavan *behind* every name and form, *beneath* every experience, *under* every situation, adds a life giving joy and maddening ecstasy to the drunken heart of love.

Given the freedom I suppose, Sanjaya would have written a full length Sanjaya-song on the Lord's Divine Song!! When the head is thrilled with the silence of under-

mysterious force of the visible wind. I sustain the breath of all living. I breathe in the verdure and in the flowers, and when the waters flow like living things, it is I. I formed those columns that support the whole earth.....all these live because I am in them and am of their life. I am wisdom. Mine is the blast of the thundered word by which all things were made. I permeate all things that they may not die. I am life”.

standing and the heart is intoxicated with the embrace of love, the man gets transported into a sense of inspired fulfilment, and to express that satisfaction language is but a frail vehicle; *therefore, without dilating much upon what is uppermost in his mind, Sanjaya summarises them all into a declaration of his burning faith, in this concluding stanza of the Bhagavad Geeta.*

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवानीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥७८॥

78. *yatra yogesvarah krsno
yatva partho dhanurdharah
tatra srir vijayo bhutir
dhruva nitir matir mama*

यत्र - Wherever, योगेश्वरः - the Lord of Yoga, कृष्णः - Krishna, यत्र - wherever, पार्थः - Partha, धनुर्धरः - the archer, तत्र - there, श्रीः - prosperity, विजयः - victory, भूतिः - expensions, ध्रुवा - Sound, firm, steady, नीतिः - policy, मति - conviction, मम - my.

78. Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Partha, the archer. there are prosperity, victory, happiness and firm (Steady or Sound) policy; such is my conviction.

This is the closing stanza of the Sreemad Bhagavad Geeta, which contains altogether seven-hundred and one verses*. This concluding verse has not been sufficeintly

* There are others who consider the Geeta as having only 700 stanzas. It is because thre is a controversy regard-

thought over and commented upon by the majority of commentators of the Geeta. The superficial word meaning of the verse, in fact, can only impress any intelligent student, at its best, as rather drab and dry. After all Sanjaya is expressing his private faith in and his personal opinion about, something, which the readers of Geeta need not necessarily accept as final. Sanjaya in effect says, "Where there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna, ready with his bow, there prosperity (*Sree*) success (*Vijaya*) expansion (*Bhooti*) and sound policy (*Dhruva-neeti*) will be; this is my sure faith".

After all a student of the Geeta is not interested in Sanjaya's opinion, and it all most amounts to a foul and secret indoctrination, if Sanjaya means diplomatically to inject into us his own personal opinion. Geeta, as a "Universal Scripture", would have fallen from its own intrinsic dignity as "the Bible of man" had this stanza no Eternal Truth to suggest, which invokes readily a universal appeal.

The perfect artist Vyasa could never have such a mistake; indeed there is a deeper significance in which an unquestionable truth has been expounded.

Krishna, the Lord of Yoga (*Yogeswara Krishna*)—All through the Geeta Krishna represented the Self, the Atman. This spiritual core is the Ground upon which the

ing the opening stanza of the 13th Chapter, which contains a question that Arjuna asks. This stanza attributed to Arjuna is in some manuscripts not available; therefore, without it, the text has only 700 stanzas arranged in its 18 Chapters. Refer our commentary on the opening stanza of Chapter 13.

entire play of happenings is staged. He can be invoked within the bosom of each one of us through anyone of the *Yoga*-techniques expounded in the Geeta.

Arjuna, ready with his bow, (*Partho Dhanurdharaha*)—Partha represents in this text book, “the confused, limited, ordinary mortal, with all his innumerable weaknesses, agitations and fears”. When he has thrown down his instrument of effort and achievement, his bow, and has reclined to impotent idleness, no doubt, there is no hope for any success or prosperity for this hero. But when he is “*ready with his bow*”, when the ordinary mortal is no more idle but has a willing readiness to use his faculties to brave the challenges of his life, there, in that man, we recognise a “*Partha, ready with his bow*”.

Now putting these two pictures together—Lord Krishna, the *Yogeswara* and Arjuna, the *Dhanurdhara*—the symbolism of a way-of-life gets completed, wherein, reinforced with the spiritual understanding man gets ready to exert and pour in his endeavours to tame life and master prosperity. In such a case there is no power that can stop him from all success. In short, the creed of the Geeta is that spirituality can be lived in life and true spiritual understanding is an asset to a man engaged in the battle of life.

Today's confusions in Society and man's helpless insignificance against the flood of events,—inspite of all his achievements in science and mastery over matter—are seen, because the *Yogeswara* in him is lying neglected, uninvoked. A happy blending of the sacred and the secular is the policy for man advised in the Geeta. In the vision of Sri Veda Vyasa, he sees world order in which man pursues a way-of-life in which the spiritual and the material values are happily

wedded to each other. Mere material production can, no doubt bring immediately a spectacular flood of the dreary wealth in to the pockets of man, but not peace and joy into his heart. Prosperity without and no peace within is a calamity, gruesome and terrible.

The stanza at once refuses to accept the other extreme : *Yogeswara* Krishna could have achieved nothing on the battlefield of Kurukshetra without Pandava Prince, Arjuna, *armed and ready to fight*. Mere spirituality without material exertion and secular achievements will not make life dynamic. I have been trying my best to bring about as clearly as I can this running vein of thought throughout the Geeta, which expounds the Philosophy of Harmony and explains its plan for man's enduring happiness.

Krishna in the Geeta stands for the marriage between secular and the sacred. Naturally, it is the ardent faith in Sanjaya* that when a community or nation has its masses galvanized to endure, to act and to achieve (Partha, the bowman) and if that generation is conscious of and has sufficiently invoked the spiritual purity of head and heart in themselves (Krishna, the Lord of Yoga) in that generation prosperity, success, expansion and a sound sane policy become the natural order.

Even in the arrangement of these terms—prosperity, success, expansion and sound policy—there is an undercurrent of logic which is evidently clear to all students of World History. In the context of the modern times and its political experience we know that without an intelligent and *steady*

* Sanjaya—Sam+Jaya—“the victoriously self-controlled, completely self-mastered.

policy no Government can lead a nation to any substantial achievement. With sound policy, *expansion* of all the dormant faculties in the community is brought about, and then only the spirit of coordination and brotherhood in the fields of achievement come to play. In this healthy spirit of love and cooperation, when a disciplined people work hard, and when their efforts are intelligently channelised by the sound policies of the Government, *success* cannot be far away. Success thus earned, as a result of the national endeavour, disciplined and channelised by a firm intelligent policy, should necessarily yield true *prosperity*. A saner philosophy we cannot find even in the existing political thoughts.

To make myself more clear : enduring prosperity must be that which is arising from successful endeavour, that is the results of cooperative and loving endeavour, and this cannot yield any success unless it is nurtured and nourished, guarded and protected by an intelligent and sound policy.

Thus read, it becomes evidently clear that it is not only Sanjaya's faith, but it is the ardent conviction of all men of self control and disciplined mind (*Sanjayas*) trained to think independently.

There are some commentators of the Geeta, who draw our attention to this lost word of the Geeta "my" (*mama*) and to the opening word in the Geeta, "*Dharma*"†. Between these two words the garland of the seven-hundred-stanzas are hung together in its immortal beauty, and so

† Chapter I Stanza 1 : "Dharma-Kshetra Kuru-Kshetra.....".

these commentators summarize the meaning of the Geeta as “ My Dharma ” (*Mama Dharma*) Geeta explains the nature of man, *my dharma*, and the nature of Truth, *My Dharma*, and how the true life starts when these two are harmonised together and come to play in one single individual. The ideal nature of all true students of the Geeta therefore should be a glorious synthesis of both the *Spiritual Knowledge* expressed in his equipoise and character, and the *dynamic love* expressed through his service of mankind and his readiness to sacrifice.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां
योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुन संवादे मोक्षसंन्यास-
योगो नाम अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥

*Om Tat Sat ity srimad bhagavadgitasupanisatsu
brahmavidyayam yogasastre sri krishnarjuna-
samvade Mokshasanyasayogo
nama ashtadaso dhyayah.*

On Tat Sat. Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad-Geeta, in the Science of the Eternal, in the scripture of Yoga, in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the eighteenth discourse ends entitled :

The Yoga of Liberation Thro' Renunciation.

The closing chapter is entitled as Liberation through Renunciation (*Moksha-samnasa-yoga*). This term is very closely reminiscent of the *Asparsa-yoga* of the Upanishads,*

* Refer Swamiji's Discourses on Mandukya and Karika.

and the definition of Yoga as given by Krishna Himself in an earlier chapter †. To renounce the false values of life in us is at once to rediscover the Divine nature in each one of us which is the essential heritage of man. To discard the best in us (*Sannyasa*), is the Liberation (*Moksha*) of the Angel in us ‡.

OM TAT SAT

Mama Sad-Guru TAPOVANA-CARANAYOHO.

“ AT THE FEET OF My Master Tapovanam ”.



† Read our commentary upon “ Dukha-samyoga-viyogam-yoga- Samgitam ” (Chapter VI stanza 23).

‡ For a detailed treatment upon the significances of the various terms in the epilogue, please refer the concluding portions in Chapters I and II in our DISCOURSES ON GEETA, Vol. 1.

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THIS IS WHAT THEY SAY ON GEETA

Early in my childhood I had felt the need of a scripture that would serve me as an unfailing guide through the trials and temptations of life. The Vedas could not supply that need, if only because to learn them would require fifteen to sixteen years of hard study at a place like Kasi for which I was not ready then. But the Gita, I had read some-where, gave within the compass of its seven hundred verses the quintessence of all the *Shastras* and the *Upanishads*. That decided me. I learnt Sanskrit to enable me to read the Geeta. Today the Geeta is not only my Bible or my Koran ; it is more than that—it is my mother. I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago. But this eternal mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since. She never changed, she has never failed me. When I am in difficulty or distress, I seek refuge in her bosom.

It is sometimes alleged against the Gita that it is too difficult a work for the man in the street. The criticism, I venture to submit, is ill-founded. If you find all the eighteen chapters too difficult to negotiate, make a careful study of the first three chapters only. They will give you in a nutshell what is propounded in greater detail and from different angles in the remaining fifteen chapters.

Even these three chapters can be further epitomised in a few verses that can be selected from these chapters. Add to this the fact that at three distinct places, the Gita goes even further and exhorts us to leave alone all 'isms' and

take refuge in the Lord alone, and it will be seen how baseless is the charge that the message of the Gita is too subtle or complicated for lay minds to understand.

The Gita is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to any one who knocks. A true votary of the Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that passeth understanding. But that peace and joy come not to the sceptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went back disappointed.

The Gita inculcates the duty of perseverance in the face of seeming failure. It teaches us that we have a right to actions only but not to the fruit thereof, and that success and failure are one and the same thing at bottom. It calls upon us to dedicate ourselves, body, mind and soul, to pure duty, and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of all chance desires and undisciplined impulses. As a "Satyagrahi", I can declare that the Gita is ever presenting me with fresh lessons. If somebody tells me that this is my delusion, my reply to him would be that I shall hug this delusion as my richest treasure.

I would advise every one to begin the day with an early morning recitation of the Gita. Take up the study of the Gita not in a carping or critical spirit, but in a devout and reverent spirit. Thus approached, she will grant your every wish. Once you have tasted of its sweet nectar, your attachment to it will grow from day to day. The recitation of the Gita verses will support you in your trials and con-

sole you in your distress, even in the darkness of solitary confinement.

—*Mahatma Gandhi.*

I find a solace in the Bhagavadgita that I miss even in the Sermon on the mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavadgita. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies—and my life has been full of external tragedies—and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of the Bhagavadgita.

—*Mahatma Gandhi.*

Among the priceless teachings that may be found in the great Hindu poem of the Mahabharatha, there is none so rare and precious as this “The Lord’s Song”. Since it fell from the divine lips of Shri Krishna on the field of battle, and stilled the surging emotions of the disciple and friend, how many troubled hearts has it quieted & strengthened, how many weary souls has it led to him! It is meant to lift the aspirant from the lower levels of renunciation, where objects are renounced, to the loftier heights, where desires are dead, and where the Yogi dwells in calm & ceaseless contemplation while his body and mind are actively employed in discharging the duties that fall to his lot in life. That the spiritual man need not be a recluse, that union with divine life may be achieved and maintained in the midst of wordly affairs, that the obstacles to that union lie, not outside us, but within us, such is the central lesson of the Bhagavad-Gita.

It is a scripture of Yoga; now Yoga is literally union; and it means harmony with the Divine law, the becoming one with the Divine life, by the subdual of all outward-going

energies. To reach this, balance must be gained, as also equilibrium, so that self, joined to the self, shall not be affected by pleasure or pain, desire or aversion, or any of the "pairs of opposites", between which untrained selves swing backwards and forwards. Moderation is therefore, the key-note of the Gita and the harmonising of all the constituents of man, till they vibrate in perfect attunement with the one, the supreme self. This is the aim the disciple is to set before him. He must learn not to be attracted by the attractive, nor repelled by the repellent, but must see both as manifestations of the Lord, so that they may be lessons for his guidance, not fetters for his bondage. In the midst of turmoil, he must rest in the Lord of Peace, discharging every duty to the fullest, not because he seeks the results of his actions, but because it is his duty to perform them. His heart is an altar; love to his Lord, the flame burning upon it; all his acts, physical and mental, are sacrifices offered on the altar, and once offered, he has with them no further concern.

As though to make the lesson more impressive, it was given on a field of battle. Arjuna, the warrior-prince, was to vindicate his brother's title, to destroy a usurper who was oppressing the land: it was his duty as prince, as warrior, to fight for the deliverance of his nation and to restore order and peace. To make the contest more bitter, loved comrades and friends stood on both sides, wringing his heart with personal anguish, and making the conflict of duties as well as physical strife. Could he slay those to whom he owed love and duty, and trample on ties of kindred? To break family ties was a sin; to leave the people in cruel bondage was a sin; where was the right way? Justice must be done, else law would be disregarded: but how slay without sin? The answer is the burden on the book. Have no personal in-

terest in the event : carry out the duty imposed by the position in life, realise that Ishvara, at once Lord and Law, is the doer, working out the mighty evolution that ends in bliss and peace ; be identified with him by devotion, and then perform duty as duty, fighting without passion or desire, without anger or hatred ; thus Activity forges no bonds, Yoga is accomplished, and the soul is free.

Such is the obvious teaching of this sacred book. But as all the acts of an Avatara are symbolical, we may pass from the outer to the inner planes, and see in the fight of Kurukshetra the battle-field of the Soul, and in the sons of Dhritarashtra, enemies it meets in its progress ; Arjuna becomes the type of the struggling Soul of the disciple, and Shri Krishna is the Logos of the Soul. Thus, the teaching of the ancient battle-field gives guidance in all later days, and trains the aspiring soul in treading the steep and thorny path that leads to peace. To all such souls in the East and West come these divine lessons ; for the path is one, though it has many names. and all Souls seek the same goal, though they may not realise their unity.

—*Mrs. Annie Besant*

The Gita is a bouquet composed of the beautiful flowers of spiritual truths collected from the Upanishads.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

I believe that in the whole history of mankind, the greatest outstanding personality having the deepest and the most profound knowledge and possessing super-human powers is Shri Krishna. I further believe that in all the living languages of the world, there is no book so full of truth-knowledge, and yet so handy as the Bhagavadgita.

This wonderful book of eighteen small chapters contains the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads and is a sure guide of the way to perfect happiness, here as well as hereafter. It preaches the three-fold way of Knowledge, Action, and Devotion, leading to the highest good of mankind. It brings to men the highest knowledge, the purest love and the most luminous action. It teaches self-control, the three-fold austerity, non-violence, truth, compassion, obedience to the call of duty for the sake of duty, and putting up a fight against unrighteousness (*Adharma*).

Full of knowledge and truth and moral teaching, it has the power to raise men from the lowest depths of ignorance and suffering to the highest glories of divine beings. To my knowledge, there is no book in the whole range of the world's literature so high above all as the Bhagavadgita, which is a treasure-house of *Dharma*, not only for Hindus but for all mankind. Several scholars of different countries have by study of this book acquired a pure and perfect knowledge of the Supreme Being Who is responsible for the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, and and have gained a stainless, desireless, supreme devotion to His feet. Those men and women are very fortunate who have got this little lamp of light full of an inexhaustible quantity of the oil of love, showing the way out of the darkness and ignorance of the world. It is incumbent on such people to use it for all mankind groping in the darkness.

—*Madan Mohan Malaviya*

What is the message of the Geeta and what its working value, its spiritual utility to the human mind of the present day, after the long ages that have elapsed since it was written and the great subsequent transformations of thought and experience? The human mind moves always forward, alters

its view-point and enlarges its thought-substance, and the effect of these changes is to render past systems of thinking obsolete or, when they are preserved, to extend, to modify and subtly or visibly to alter their value. The vitality of ancient doctrine consists in the extent to which it naturally lends itself to such a treatment; for that means that whatever may have been the limitations or the obsolescences of the form of its thought, the truth of substance, the truth of living vision and experience on which its system was built, is still sound and retains a permanent validity significance. The Gita is a book that has worn extraordinarily well, and it is almost as fresh and still in its real substance quite as new, because always renewable in experience, as when it first appeared in or was written into the frame of the 'Mahabharata'. It is still received in India as one of the great bodies of doctrine that most authoritatively govern religious thinking; and its teaching is acknowledged as of the highest value if not wholly accepted by almost all shades of religious belief and opinion. Its influence is not merely philosophic or academic but immediate and living, an influence both for thought and action, and its ideas are actually at work as a powerful shaping factor in the revival and renewal of a nation and a culture. It has even been said recently by a great voice that all we need of spiritual truth for the spiritual life is to be found in the Gita. It would be to encourage the superstition of the book to take too literally that utterance. The truth of the spirit is infinite and cannot be circumscribed in that manner. Still it may be said that most of the main clues are there and that after all the later developments of spiritual experience and discovery we can still return to it for a large inspiration and guidance. Outside India too it is universally acknowledged as one of the world's great scriptures, although

in Europe its thought is better understood than its secret of spiritual practice.

—*Aurobindo*.

The Bhagavadgita is more a religious classic than a philosophical treatise. It is not an esoteric work designed for and understood by the specially initiated but a popular poem which helps even those "who wander in the region of the many and variable". It gives utterance to the aspirations of the pilgrims of all sects who seek to tread the inner way to the city of God. We touch reality most deeply, where men struggle, fail and triumph. Millions of Hindus, for centuries, have found comfort in this great book which sets forth in precise and penetrating words the essential principles of a spiritual religion which are not contingent on ill-founded facts, unscientific dogmas or arbitrary fancies. With a long history of spiritual power, it serves even today as a light to all who will receive illumination from the profundity of its wisdom which insists on a world wider and deeper than wars and revolutions can touch. It is a powerful shaping factor in the renewal of spiritual life and has secured an assured place among the world's great scriptures.

The teaching of the Gita is not presented as a metaphysical system thought out by an individual thinker or school of thinkers. It is set forth as a tradition which has emerged from the religious life of mankind. It is articulated by a profound seer who sees truth in its many-sidedness and believes in its saving power. It represents not any sect of Hinduism but Hinduism as a whole, not merely Hinduism but religion as such, in its universality, without limit of time or space, embracing within its synthesis the whole gamut of the human spirit, from the crude fetishism of the

savage to the creative affirmations of the saint. The suggestions set forth in the Gita about the meaning and value of existence, the sense of eternal values and the way in which the ultimate mysteries are illumined by the light of reason and moral intuition provide the basis for agreement in mind and spirit so very essential for keeping together the world which has become materially one by the universal acceptance of the externals of civilization.

As the colophon indicates, the Bhagavadgita is both metaphysics and ethics, *brahmavidya* and *yogasastra*, the science of reality and the art of union with reality. The truths of spirit can be apprehended only by those who prepare themselves for their reception by rigorous discipline. We must cleanse the mind of all distraction and purge the heart from all corruption, to acquire spiritual wisdom. Again, the preception of the truth results in the renewal of life. The realm of spirit is not cut off from the realm of life. To divide man into outer desire and inner quality is to violate the integrity of human life. The illumined soul acts as a member of the kingdom of God, affecting the world he touches and becoming a saviour to others. The two orders of reality, the transcendent and the empirical, are closely related. The opening section of the Gita raises the question of the problem of human action. How can we live in the Highest Self and yet continue to work in the world. The answer given is the traditional answer of the Hindu religion, though it is stated with a new emphasis.

By its official designation, the Gita is called an upanisad, since it derives its main inspiration from that remarkable group of scriptures, the *upanisads*. Though the Gita gives us a vision of truth, impressive and profound, though it

opens up new paths for the mind of man, it accepts assumptions which are a part of the tradition of past generations and embedded in the language it employs. It crystallizes and concentrates the thoughts and feelings which were developing among the thinking people of its time. The fratricidal struggle is made the occasion for the development of a spiritual message based on the ancient wisdom, *prajna purani*, of the *Upanisads*.

—*Dr. Radhakrishnan.*

The Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been done. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind.....The Bhagavadgita is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy.

—*Aldous Huxley.*

This Famous *Gitasastra* is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching. A knowledge of its teaching leads to the realization of all human aspirations.

—*Shankara.*

The Geeta was not preached either as a pastime for persons tired out after living a worldly life in the pursuit of selfish motives, nor as a preparatory lesson for living such worldly life, but in order to give philosophical advice as to how one should live his worly life with an eye to Release *moksha*, and as to the true duty of human beings in worldly life. My last prayer to everyone, therefore, is that one should not fail to thoroughly understand this ancient science of the life of a householder, or of worldly life, as early as possible in one's life.

—*Bal Gangadhar Tilak.*

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